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SHORT HISTORY OF FRANCE

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1252

FOR

YOUNG PEOPLE.

BY

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AUTHOR OF "SIX LITTLE COOKS," AND "DORA'S HOUSEKEEPING."

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TO

ALL MY PUPILS:

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

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A

SHORT HISTORY OF FRANCE

FOR

YOUNG PEOPLE.

CHAPTER I.

GAUL BEFORE CHRIST.



It is hard to realize, as one travels now through fertile France and sees the well-tilled fields, noble cities, and vineyards heavy with their purple fruit, that it was once covered by tangled forests, whose only inhabitants were wild beasts and men nearly as savage as they. Indeed, one might almost have mistaken the man for the animal at a little distance, for they both wore coverings of skins and never combed their hair; but when you saw the human being drinking out of a cup formed from the skull of his enemy, then you knew he must be a man, for wild beasts are not so revengeful.

The old name for France was Gaul, and the people who lived there before the time of Christ are supposed to have come from Central Asia, and to have belonged to one of the fierce races called Celtic, which spread over the western part of Europe before history begins.

But all this is uncertain; and though the various guesses about it form an interesting study, we must limit ourselves now to what we can be sure of. Before going further, let me advise the young student always to have a map open before him while reading history. This will fix in his mind the situations of different places, and help him to make a sort of picture for himself of what was going on.

About six hundred years before Christ, a ship containing a few Greeks from Phoea, a town in Asia Minor, which was itself settled from Greece, landed on the shore of a beautiful bay of the Mediterranean, in the south of what is now France. Being kindly received by the chief of a tribe of Gauls near by, they sent back to their native town for more settlers, and gradually built a city, to which they gave the name of Massilia, and which still exists as Marseilles.

Of that part of Gaul which lay outside of this colony we know but little before the time of its conquest by Cæsar, but its inhabitants forced themselves on the notice of other nations at a much earlier date, by terrible invasions which made them the dread of their civilized neighbors. From time to time they poured down into Italy, seeking in its fertile soil pasturage for the flocks and herds which saved them the trouble of tilling the ground; and more than once these barbarians burned the city of Rome itself.

In the time of Alexander the Great, some of them wandered far enough to the East to meet with that famous warrior, to whom they offered their services in boastful language. He called them "swaggerers," but found them brave in battle, and after his death many of

then remained in the service of his generals. It was not long, however, before they grew tired of fighting other people's battles, and determined to make war on their own account. A ferocious and insolent chief, or *bran*, whom the Romans called Brennus, and who had already done much mischief in Italy, resolved to pillage the rich shrine of Apollo at Delphi. He was successful in his first attack on the Greeks, but their natural spirit being roused, they joined together for a vigorous defense and defeated him.

Upon this Brennus stabbed himself, leaving orders for his officers to cut the throats of their own wounded men, to prevent them from falling into the enemy's hands, and then to flee from the country with what soldiers they had left. This was done, and Greece was saved for that time. It was Brennus who first used the well known exclamation "Væ victis!" "Woe to the vanquished!" which so truly and terribly expressed the state of those who fell into his power.

It would be pleasant, if one had the time, to write a whole book about the doings of these strange people as they swept over one country after another, and to repeat all the stories, some true and some false, which are told of them by the nations whom they visited. But we must hasten back to Gaul itself, and can only take a glance at what its warriors did in foreign lands. The name of Galatia, in Asia Minor (to whose people St. Paul wrote one of his epistles), still reminds us that a colony of Gauls once settled there, and Galicia, in Spain, owes its name to the same cause. In Italy the Gauls forced the Romans to give them a district south of the Alps, which in later times was re-conquered by

Rome and called Cisalpine Gaul, *Cis* meaning "on this side"; the country north of it was called Transalpine, *trans* meaning "across," or "beyond." Afterward Cisalpine Gaul was called Gallia Togata, because the inhabitants wore the Roman *toga*, or gown; and the other Gallia Braccata, from the breeches or short trousers worn there.

When the Romans made themselves masters of this province, they declared solemnly that the Alps were a barrier placed by nature between Italy and Gaul, and pronounced a curse on whoever should attempt to cross it. In spite of this declaration, they soon began to cast their eyes towards the pleasant region of which Massilia was the centre, and about a hundred and fifty years before Christ, an opportunity occurred of securing it, which was too tempting to be thrown away.

The Massilians had become engaged in a struggle with the Gallic tribes around them, and finding themselves likely to get the worst of it, applied to Rome for aid. It is the old story over again. The barbarians were driven away, but those who had come to help stayed to conquer, and slowly but surely the descendants of the Greek colonists found themselves transformed into subjects of the victorious Romans.

The Gauls in the north had their own troubles. Having quarrelled among themselves, some of them called in the aid of Ariovistus, a German chieftain from beyond the Rhine. Unfortunate invitation! Ariovistus came very willingly, and after conquering the enemy he proceeded to make himself master of those who had asked him for help. Immense numbers of his countrymen poured into Gaul, as indeed

they had begun to do before this time, and the inhabitants soon saw that they had only the choice of being enslaved by the barbarian or by the Roman.

It is just at this point that Julius Cæsar comes upon the scene. To us, who can see all that followed as well as what went before, it is plain that it would have been better for the German warrior to retire at once to his native forests, and occupy himself in hunting wild beasts or fighting his fellow-countrymen; but he could not see this, and rushed headlong upon his fate. Trusting to his own skill, and the bravery of his soldiers, he insisted on giving battle to Cæsar, who warned him to retire. His men fought like tigers, but Roman discipline carried the day, and the barbarians were driven in disgrace across the Rhine, after losing fifty thousand men. Ariovistus was one of those who fled, but died soon afterwards, whether from his wounds or from rage and despair seems uncertain. Cæsar went on triumphantly in his career of conquest, and in a few years saw all Gaul at his feet, though the natives made some heroic efforts to save their country from slavery.

There is a sad story of a young nobleman whom Cæsar calls Vercingetorix, which in the Gallic language meant "chief of a hundred chiefs," who got together a great army of patriots while Cæsar was away in Italy, and tried to drive the hated invader out of the country, but in vain. He showed not only wonderful courage and perseverance, but military skill also, which would astonish us if we did not know that the Gauls had been all this time learning from their enemies. At last there was nothing left for

him to do but to give up, and being led into Cæsar's presence, splendidly dressed, he knelt in silence at his feet, hoping no doubt that the great conqueror might take pleasure in showing mercy, but Cæsar was too much irritated by the resistance he had met with to be magnanimous. Poor Vercingetorix was thrown into a dungeon, and after years of weary captivity, was dragged from his prison to walk in chains behind Cæsar's chariot at a triumph, and then led back to immediate execution.

With his failure died the last hope of liberty for Gaul. From this time Cæsar met with no serious trouble there, and spent his time in strengthening his government and trying to reconcile the natives to it. Nine years after his first entrance, during which time the invasion of Britain took place, most of the Roman soldiers were withdrawn, leaving only enough to secure their conquest. Nine terrible years they had been, marked by horrors which in these more peaceful times we can scarcely imagine, though war is always bad enough. The Romans did not know what mercy was, in treating those whom they had conquered; and if we may believe their own writers, it was not uncommon for them, when they had taken a city, to put to death every creature they found within its walls, not sparing even the women and children.

The people of Gaul had changed very much, as you may imagine, between the time when the Greeks first landed on their shores and that when Julius Cæsar saw them. They had learned to like bright colors in dress, and to adorn themselves with heavy gold chains, bracelets and other ornaments. Their women must

have been quite skillful, for they wove gay plaids for their husbands' clothes, and made their cloaks in true military fashion.

These old Gauls looked very different from a modern Frenchman. They were tall and broad-shouldered, with fair complexion and blue eyes, and when they went to battle their long light hair and beards streamed in the wind, and must have been sometimes rather in the way. They attached so much importance to keeping their bodies in good fighting order, that the youth who became fat was punished for fear it should make him lazy ; and to teach the soldiers to be in time, the last man who arrived when an army was assembling was put to death. One quality which we notice in these barbarians is their great pride, which led them to consider themselves superior to every body else. One of them said on seeing the closely packed ranks of Roman soldiers, "There is not a meal for my dogs !" But his dogs did not feed on the Romans nevertheless.

The women of this long-haired nation (for so the Romans always speak of the Gauls), are described as being, if possible, fiercer in battle than their husbands and brothers. When opposed to the enemy they gnashed their teeth, stretched out their necks and brandished their arms like windmills; then they would pound with their heavy fists in a way which few Roman skulls could withstand. It is related of their northern neighbors, the wives of the Cimbrians or Kymri, that after a disastrous battle they were left at the mercy of the victors, and knowing well what such mercy was, they determined to take the matter into their own hands.

They first killed all their children by strangling or crushing them; then they hanged themselves, or sought death in even more dreadful ways. After this the Romans had still an army of dogs to conquer, for these faithful creatures, furious as wolves, defended the bodies of the slain, until at length not a living creature remained to protest against their victory.

The houses from which these warriors issued were not such as to tempt them to stay at home much of the time. They were made of wood or clay, and were somewhat like an old-fashioned bee-hive in shape, which would have done very well if there had been plenty of windows; but just imagine the only light and air they had coming in through the door! I should rather say the door-hole, for doors to open and shut were the invention of a later time. But the Gauls were quick at learning, and by the time Cæsar had done with them everything was changed. They adopted the Roman customs and habits, which were certainly more convenient than their own, and some of them even took the Roman names, so much smoother and shorter than theirs. One Vercundoridub named himself after Julius Cæsar;—a change probably gratifying to the Romans though unflattering to the Gauls,—certainly amusing to us moderns.

The religion of the Gauls was the Druid, the same which prevailed in Britain. You know from reading English history what this was; that with much that was noble the Druid priests mingled the horrible practice of human sacrifices, and that they were also law-givers and poets. They believed in a future life, and like our North America Indians, had horses, dogs, and

sometimes even slaves burned on the funeral pile or buried with the dead man, that he might have proper attendants in the other world. Let us hope that they generally killed these poor victims first; but I fear that this was not always the case.

The Gauls were in advance of modern savages in one respect; they had a great regard for women. One wife was enough for them, and they treated her with respect, even allowing her to give her opinion in their councils. In return, the Gallic wife seems to have worked for her husband with all her heart. She took care of his house, such as it was, fought by his side in battle, and trained up his young warriors to the best of her ability, and if he gave her a beating occasionally, it was not for want of understanding her worth, but only that she might be suitably impressed with his dignity and kept in her proper position.

CHAPTER II.

GAUL UNDER THE EMPERORS.



THE history of Gaul for the next five hundred years shows us what was the course of things wherever the Romans carried their victorious arms. The people, as soon as they had become accustomed to their new masters, adopted their habits and customs; and it was not long before Gaul began to rival Rome itself in the luxury of its wealthier inhabitants. The nobles built superb palaces, filled with

everything rare and costly, and spent their time in frivolous amusements or indolent repose. But all this had to be paid for by somebody, and the laboring classes were the source from which this ceaseless stream of wealth flowed, wrung from them amid groans and bitter tears.

So cruel were the demands made upon them, that to escape the exactions of their taskmasters they would fly from their country, or even sell themselves for slaves. But where could any one be out of the power of Rome? In all known lands she could pursue the wretched victim and force him back to his place, there to expiate, perhaps by the scourge or other torture, the crime of having dared to resist her will. The slaves alone felt no material difference; their condition had always been so miserable that it could scarcely change for the worse; their life and limbs were at the mercy of their owners as before, and though without hope of anything better, they had also no lower depth of misery to fear.

Perhaps you will get a better idea of what was meant by Roman taxation if you read the words of an old Latin writer about it, than by any description of mine. He says: "The lands were measured out to the last clod; trees and vines were counted; every head of cattle was entered on the tax-list, every human being was registered; nothing was heard but whips and cries of torment. The faithful slave was tortured to force him to depose against his master (to tell what property he had), the wife against her husband, the son against his father. No excuse was admitted on the score of age or sickness; meanwhile the animals

were diminishing, the men were dying off, and still the tax was exacted for the dead."

You have read in the history of Rome what an important part Gaul plays in the first centuries after Christ. Augustus, who had been reigning twenty-seven years at the beginning of the Christian era, lived for several years at Lugdunum (now called Lyons), which was then the capital of Gaul. The Emperor Claudius was born there, and Caligula, the half-crazy and all-wicked tyrant, for some time made Gaul the scene of his mad freaks. Claudius was the most liberal and humane of all the emperors in respect to that province, and granted important privileges to the people. He was, however, very harsh toward the Druids, whom Augustus had previously humbled to a great extent; Claudius not only drove them out of Gaul, but pursued them into Britain, about a hundred years after the first invasion of that country by Julius Cæsar. Up to this time the two religions—the Druidism of Gaul and the Paganism of Rome—had existed side by side; but after its priests were driven out, Druidism ceased to have any hold on the minds of the people, and a belief in the gods of Rome prevailed until the introduction of Christianity.

Although the Romans were entirely masters of Southern Gaul, there still broke out, from time to time, some sparks of a desire for freedom elsewhere. In Belgica, as the northern part was called, a man named Civilis undertook to raise a rebellion in the reign of the Emperor Vespasian. He induced many tribes to join him, and proclaimed Sabinus, a Gallic citizen, as emperor. When the rebellion was put down, Civilis,

who was a foreigner, was pardoned, but Sabinus, being a Roman subject, could expect no mercy, and concealed himself in some vaults in the neighborhood of his house. This was known to a faithful slave of his, who set fire to the house and then spread the report that his master had perished in the flames. When Eponina, the wife of Sabinus, heard this, she was nearly frantic; but learning the truth from the slave, she braved every danger in order to visit her husband in his hiding-place. He directed her to keep up the show of mourning for him, and she joined him in the vault, where they spent nine years together, cared for by their devoted servant.

After the first few months, Eponina formed a plan of asking for pardon from the emperor, who was said to be more merciful than any who had been before him. So she had her husband's head and beard shaved, dressed him like a slave, and having disguised herself, they reached Rome safely. On arriving there, however, the friends who were in the secret advised them not to trust themselves to the doubtful mercy of Vespasian, and they retired to their cellar and might have passed the rest of their lives there, happy in each other's society, but that on a second visit of Eponina to Rome she was discovered, and they were both taken prisoners. On being carried before the cruel Emperor, Eponina threw herself at his feet, and showing him the two beautiful boys who had been born while they were living in the cave, she begged forgiveness for her husband. It was of no use; Sabinus was condemned to death, and Eponina, asking as a special favor that she might share his fate, was beheaded at

the same time. The boys lived to be men, but could do nothing for their country, and the Gauls sank deeper and deeper into the degradation of slavery.

But the time was coming when the truth which was to make them "free indeed" would dawn upon them and lighten their darkness, though it was not without terrible experiences of the cruelty of man, that the believers in Christ's religion at last saw the end of the old and the triumph of the new.

About a hundred and sixty years after Christ, some Christian missionaries from Asia Minor came to Gaul and settled at Lugdunum ; for a long time they were allowed to gather converts there, and many churches arose in the midst of heathen population. At length, however, the jealous passion of the latter were aroused, and they felt a deep hatred towards the pure, simple minded people whose holy lives were a constant reproach to their own self-indulgence. It was easy to start a persecution ; for sad to say, the better man an emperor was, the more he felt it necessary to punish those whom he considered enemies of the gods and therefore of true religion. So these saints, as we call them now, though they would not have given themselves any such title, were subjected to every species of cruelty which the ingenuity of their enemies could invent, and most of them bore it all with a heroism far greater than was ever shown by a warrior on the field of battle.

It must not be thought that the emperors were entirely responsible for all the horrors committed in these persecutions. They were told that the Christians were wicked people, guilty of the most abomina-

ble practices, and without giving themselves the trouble to inquire fully into the matter, they gave general orders for punishing them. These orders were carried out often hundreds of miles away from where the emperors were, and the brutal passions of the pagan mob added tortures to them which their authors never dreamed of.

The church continued to be subject to persecutions for about a hundred and fifty years, though sometimes enjoying long periods of repose. Early in the fourth century the emperor Constantine declared himself a Christian, and the scattered and tormented churches soon formed a network over the land, scarcely to be broken even by the wild wave of barbarism which with the invasion of the Franks in the next century, again swept over the country. When you go to Paris, you will see, a little outside of the city, a hill called Montmartre, which means "Mountain of martyrs;" and the old cathedral of St. Denis, not far off, was built in memory of the martyr Dionysius, who suffered there, and whose name gradually became shortened as you see.

This cutting down of names is sometimes a little puzzling. One would not suspect that the modern town of Autun, in France, was at first called Augustodunum, in honor of the emperor Augustus. It is easier to recognize in Orleans the name of Aurelian. But when we hear that the town of Aix was originally Aquæ Sextiæ (the waters of Sextius, so called because Sextius discovered the mineral springs there), our ingenuity is taxed to the utmost. The district in France called Provence, in which the town of Aix is situated,

naturally received its name from being the first Roman *province*. Not only these names of places, but also nearly all other French words are derived directly from the Latin.

About two hundred and fifty years after Christ we first begin to hear of people called the Franks, a name given to many different tribes in Germany, who had an unpleasant habit of crossing the Rhine in great numbers and fighting furiously with the people of Gaul. The Roman general Aurelian, afterwards emperor, was the first to meet these invaders and drive them back into their native forests, and his success delighted his countrymen so much that a song was made in his honor and sung by the soldiers. These are the only words of it which have come down to us :

“Mille Francos, mille Sarmatas, semel occidimus :
Mille, mille, mille, mille Persas quærimus.”

“We have already killed a thousand Franks and a thousand Sarmatians; we want a thousand, thousand, thousand, thousand Persians.” This is the first time that the name of Franks appears in history, and Aurelian perhaps thought it would be the last; but they were not so easily discouraged. They kept on coming and being driven back for the next two hundred years, each Emperor finding himself a little less able than the last to get rid of them. At last they grew so numerous that there was no hope of dislodging them, and their presence in Gaul was accepted as a disagreeable necessity.

But the Franks were not the only people destined to be the despair of the Romans in those unhappy days. Attila, the scourge of God ! What visions of


horror does this name call up before us! We seem to see his hideous face, with its flat nose, dark skin, and ugly little eyes, his huge head on a short, stumpy body, his thin gray hair and straggling beard,—all these present themselves to our minds when we think of the savage who said of himself: “The stars fall at my approach; the earth trembles; I am the hammer of the universe!” How far this ferocious chief had traveled before he attacked the trembling nations who occupied Gaul we have no means of knowing, but the Huns, whom he commanded, started from that vast plain of Central Asia to which we give the general name of Scythia without knowing its exact limits. The horrible cruelties practised by his soldiers, the ravages which marked his bloody path, the noble cities destroyed by his army, are subjects too painful to dwell upon, but at last the battle of Chalons put an end to his victorious career, and saved Western Europe from immediate destruction. This was one of the bloodiest combats ever fought. Such a trampling of human heads under horses’ feet, such frantic slashing and hewing, have seldom been seen since men began to fight. The struggle lasted through a long June day, and so evenly were the armies matched that when night fell, no one could tell which side had won.

In the morning, when the field of dead and dying lay revealed to view, it is no wonder that neither army cared to renew the conflict. Attila, by staying quietly in his camp instead of rushing against his enemies as usual, confessed himself beaten, and when he sullenly retired toward the south the Roman general judged it prudent not to follow him.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, 476, A. D., the Franks continued to grow in power and importance, and ended by establishing themselves firmly in Gaul, which from them began about this time to be called Francia. Their name used to be thought to mean Freemen, but recent writers say that it has more nearly the signification of our word ferocious, and comes from an old name for a battle-axe.

CHAPTER III.

CLOVIS, KING OF THE FRANKS—A. D. 481–511.

HE French monarchy is generally considered to begin with Clovis, though he had several half-imaginary ancestors who are sometimes included in the list of sovereigns. The old writers tell us about one Pharamond, whom they call the first king of the Franks; but he seems to be a person even more mythical than the British king Arthur, and so much nonsense is mixed up with the accounts of him that it will be the safest way to let him drop altogether. But his son Clodion (if Clodion was his son) was really a brave warrior, who fought against the Roman consul Aëtius, and was defeated by him. Meroveus, the son of Clodion, was the one from whom the first royal family of France, the Merovingian, took its name; and Childeric, son of Meroveus, was the father of Clovis.

What title these chiefs bore in their own language,

is of little consequence. They were the founders of a long line of monarchs, and Clodion is said to have taken delight in the name of the "long-haired," which was borne by his descendants, flowing hair being only allowed among kings and nobles. It must be remembered always that they were not kings of France, but of the Franks, which was quite a different thing. When Clovis became king, he did not own a foot of land in what is now called France. His father, Childeric, was king of that division called the Salian Franks, possessing only a small portion of land in Belgica, within the limits of modern Belgium, and had found it hard work to hold his own without trying to get anything away from his neighbors. By the time that Clovis reached manhood, however, the scene changes. He was only fifteen years old when he came to the throne, and at twenty he fought a battle at Soissons with the Roman governor Syagrius, defeated him, and thus swept away the last faint trace of Roman dominion in Gaul. That part of the country not occupied by the Franks was divided between the Burgundians and Visigoths, who had also taken advantage of the decay of the Roman power to establish themselves on this fertile soil.

A story told about Clovis shows the rough manners of the times and his own politic, yet revengeful disposition. Among the spoil distributed after the battle of Soissons was a rich vase, which had been taken some time before from a church in Rheims. The bishop of that city asked Clovis to restore it, which the latter promised to do, and requested that in the general division this vase might be allotted to him in addition

to his rightful share, so that he might return it to the church. The soldiers agreed to this by general consent, for it was to Clovis that they owed the victory, and this was a small favor to ask where there was an abundance of booty for all. But a vain and foolish Frank, jealous of the praises bestowed on Clovis, struck the vase a violent blow with his battle-axe, saying, "You shall have nothing but what comes to you fairly by lot." Clovis made no reply, but delivered the vase to the messenger just as it was, accepting apparently the condition that it should be included in his portion. A year afterwards, as he was reviewing his troops, he passed before each one in turn till he came to the offending soldier. Snatching away the man's battle-axe and throwing it on the ground, he reproved him sharply for not keeping it in better order. As the other stooped to pick it up, the king swung his own battle-axe with both hands in the air, bringing it down with a terrible crash on the skull of the unfortunate man, and thundered out the words, "So you did to the vase at Soissons! "

A bold act of vengeance like this did more to impress the minds of the half-savage warriors who were looking on than a year of steady discipline would have done, and Clovis found after this that his soldiers were cured of all desire to mutiny.

The Franks themselves called this chieftain Chlodwig, which is the same name with the German Ludwig, the French Louis and the English Lewis. The Latin form being short and easy to pronounce has been retained by most modern historians, but it must not be forgotten that for several hundred years these conquerors

of Gaul continued to be Germans in feeling and language. It would be a mistake to think of them as French.

After the battle of Soissons, Clovis began to think it was time for him to take a wife, and his marriage was a matter of more importance than such matters usually are to kings; for on it was to depend, for a time at least, the religion of the new France. He and most of his countrymen were still Pagans, while the Gauls had all by this time become Christians, as had also the Visigoths in the south of France, and the Burgundians in the east.

It would appear that none of the Frankish maidens were especially pleasing to Clovis; for, hearing of the great beauty and other charms of Clotilda, niece of the King of Burgundy, he sent to ask her hand in marriage. Her uncle would have preferred not to bestow her upon a pagan, but he did not dare to refuse the victor of Soissons; so he gave the lovely Clotilda into the hands of the messengers sent to demand her, and after a journey which must have been a very exciting one to her, she was conducted into the presence of the king. If she had not turned out to be as handsome as report had made her, Clovis would probably not have hesitated to send her back again; but he was more than satisfied—he was delighted, and the marriage took place forthwith.

Clovis continued firm in his old belief, and when a little son was born and Clotilda wished to have it baptized, the rough king refused, saying that her God was no better than the rest, and that in fact, there was no proof that he was a god at all; Clotilda had her

way, however, and the little prince was christened with great solemnity, the Queen hoping in this way to influence her pagan husband, who no doubt loved imposing ceremonies. But to the great disappointment of both, the child soon died, and then Clovis reproached his wife, saying that if it had been baptized in the name of one of his gods it would have lived, but that a baptism in the name of hers was as good as none at all. What answer she made to this bitter taunt we are not informed; but the fact that when a second son was born he was baptized just as the other had been, seems to show that the quarrel was not very serious.

Before long this child also was taken sick and the king was indignant enough. "How could it be otherwise?" he said to the anxious mother; "baptized in the name of your Christ, you could not expect anything else." However, the baby was cured, and Clovis began to have a little more respect for the God of Clotilda: and he was soon destined to change his mind so entirely that his wife must have felt quite repaid for all the efforts she had made to bring him round to her way of thinking.

When Clovis had been reigning fifteen years, several tribes of the Allemanni, a powerful German nation whose name still survives in *Allemagne*, the French word for Germany, crossed the Rhine and invaded the country of a division of Franks called Ripuarians, whose capital was Cologne.

As the Salian Franks were on good terms with their eastern neighbors, Clovis marched at once to the relief of the latter, and a great battle was fought at Tolbiac,

near Cologne. The armies were well matched, the fight was bloody, and for some time it seemed uncertain which side would conquer; but in the midst of the struggle Clovis raised his hands to Heaven and vowed that if Clotilda's God would give him the victory, he would become a Christian. Then he rushed in among the enemy more furiously than ever, his soldiers were animated by his example, the German king was killed and the enemy driven from the field.

Another account of this conversion is that Clovis had promised his wife before setting out that he would turn Christian if he was successful; but whichever one we take, we can see that he was still much of a Pagan at heart and thought Clotilda's only one of many gods who might give him the victory if they chose. We will hope that before being baptized by the good bishop St. Remy, he was better instructed, though, unhappily, his conduct during the rest of his life did not show that he had a very intelligent idea of what such a change meant. "Bow thine head" said the bishop to him at his baptism; "adore what thou hast burned; burn what thou hast adored!" Then he was anointed with holy oil which we are told was brought from heaven by a dove for that special purpose, and more than three thousand of his bravest soldiers were baptized at the same time. This was on Christmas day, 496 A. D.

The conversion of Clovis was of far greater importance to the prosperity of the people of Gaul than would appear at first sight. They had up to this time consisted of various groups, without any interests in common and in some cases bitterly opposed to each

other; they were now about to begin on a period when, being brought under one rule, they were to "pull together" as it were, for the common glory of all. The Christian Church had by this time become one of the well-recognized governing powers of civilized Europe. In all the oppressions and want suffered by the lower orders, it was to the bishops that they looked for help and defence, and for the redress of their many grievances; and by allying himself with the clergy, Clovis secured their support and consequently the chief influence in the country.

Having secured these important friends, Clovis now began to think of enlarging his dominions. He first reduced to submission the people of Armorica (that peninsula in the west of France which was afterward called Brittany), and then turned his attention to Burgundy, whose king was a hateful old tyrant who had murdered two of his own brothers, the father of Queen Clotilda being one of them. This bad man was glad to buy peace by offering Clovis an annual tribute in money, so Burgundy, as well as Armorica, was added by Clovis to the countries which owned his sway. But he had no idea of stopping here. He turned his newly-adopted piety to good account by saying to his soldiers, "What a shame it is that the fairest part of Gaul should be in possession of those Arian heretics!" meaning the Visigoths in the south, who did not believe in the same form of Christianity that he did. You may be sure that the soldiers asked nothing better than to do some more fighting, with Clovis at their head; so the army set out on its march.

An incident is related which shows how strongly

this king felt the importance of keeping on good terms with the church. As he was crossing the territory of Tours, he forbade the soldiers to take anything except grass and water, out of respect to Saint Martin, the patron saint of that district. One of them thought he would be safe in stealing some hay, which he said was only dried grass, from a poor man who struggled hard to keep his property. When Clovis heard of this he cut off the soldier's head with one blow of his sword, saying: "What will become of us if we offend St. Martin?" Whether he ordered the hay to be restored to the poor man, or paid for, is not stated. That was probably not thought any part of the atonement. You know that in those days an army was expected to take whatever it wanted from the country-people along its line of march, and it was only the policy or piety of the king that in this particular case made a difference.

Clovis met the Visigoths not far from Poitiers, and a dreadful battle was fought, in which he killed their king Alaric with his own hand, and put their army to flight. But Theodoric, the ruler of the Ostrogoths or East Goths (the Visigoths being West Goths), was now king of Italy and came to the rescue of his neighbors. The result was that a small portion of their territory called Septimania, around the old Roman city of Narbonne, kept its independence until it was conquered some time later by the Moors of Spain.

So great a King must have a capital, and Clovis fixed upon a village on an island in the river Seine as worthy of the honor of becoming his royal residence. This place was originally called Lutetia, which means mud-

town, but the Romans had changed its name to Paris, from a tribe called Parisii, which they found there when they first conquered the country. Clovis did much to improve this city of Paris, and possibly if it had been let alone from his time we might still see some remains of his work; but the enemies who have so often burned it since then have left little trace of its old glory, save the crumbling remains of the Emperor Julian's palace on the bank of the river Seine.

Thus far, perhaps, we may have thought of Clovis only as an able and unscrupulous warrior, who showed his ingenuity in devising reasons for adding other people's dominions to his own; but the latter part of his reign proved that ambition had overcome all the nobler feelings of his nature, and he appears before us only in the light of a cold-blooded murderer. The Franks consisted of a collection of tribes, each under its own chief, who were joined together for purposes of common defence. Clovis determined that he would be sole king of all these tribes, and took measures accordingly.

Sending secretly a messenger to Cloderic, the son of one of their kings, he said, "Your father is old, and his wound makes him limp on one foot; if he should die his kingdom would come to you, and we should be friends." The base son had his father assassinated while asleep in his tent, and then sent word to his tempter, "My father is dead, and his gold and silver are mine. Send and take what you please." Of course Clovis sent again, but this time his envoys had other instructions. Cloderic showed them the great chest where his father had kept his treasures. "Plunge in

your hand to the bottom," said the messenger of Clovis, "so as not to leave any behind." The unsuspecting king did so, and while thus helpless, a battle-axe split his skull in two.

As soon as this success was reported to Clovis, he went to Cologne, the capital of Cloderic, and said to the Franks whom he caused to be assembled there, "Listen to what has happened: the father of Cloderic is dead, killed by his son's order, and some one, I don't know who, killed his son while he was looking over his father's treasures. I had nothing to do with it, for I could not do anything so wicked as to shed the blood of my relatives, but I can give you some good advice if you like to take it. Put yourselves under my protection, and I will take care of you." Then they shouted for joy, lifted him on a huge buckler or shield, and hailed him as their King.

This was only the beginning. Taking advantage of an affront offered him twenty years before by another of these kings, he took him and his son prisoners, and had their heads shaved, saying that they should become monks. The son used some expression which Clovis chose to consider as a threat, and had them both beheaded, though they were utterly helpless and in his power. A third king being defeated in battle and taken prisoner, had his arms tied behind his back, and in this condition was carried before Clovis, together with his son.

"Why did you dishonor our family," inquired the cruel victor, "by letting yourself be bound? You might much better have died." And so saying, he split open his head with a battle-axe. Then turning

to the son, he said, "If you had helped your father as you ought to have done, he would never have been overcome;" and crushed his skull in the same manner. One more king remained, who was killed by the order of Clovis, though not with his own hands, and thus he found himself undisputed lord of all the Franks and of the Roman Gauls, and receiving tribute from the nominal sovereigns of Burgundy and Brittany.

He was truly a wonderful man, and had he been as good as he was great, would have commanded our hearty admiration. As it is, we must add his name to the long list of those in whom a love of power has dried up not only every feeling of virtue and honor, but also of natural affection, for many of his victims were his own near relatives. It is said that after all these murders Clovis pathetically exclaimed: "Alas! I am left alone among strangers, with none of my kindred to support me in the day of trouble!" The suspicion is expressed by a shrewd chronicler of the time, that he hoped in this way to find out whether he had any relatives left, so that he might kill the rest of them.

We might expect that a reign of crime and bloodshed like this would have been closed by a violent death, either on the battle-field or by assassination; but Clovis died peaceably in his bed, after a reign of thirty years, being only forty-five years old, and having enjoyed his new dignity of King of all the Franks but little more than a year. He was buried at Paris, in the church of St. Peter and St. Paul, the name of which was afterwards changed to St. Genevieve, in honor of a peasant girl who was said to have saved the city from an attack of the Huns.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LATER MEROVINGIANS.—511-752.



THE earliest historians tell us that Meroveus or Meerwig, the son of Clodion, was the grandfather of Clovis, and there seems to be no reason why we should not believe them. His descendants are generally called Merovingians, according to the Latin form of the word, though they are sometimes spoken of under their German name of Meerwings.

This race or family seem to have been about as wicked as any that ever disgraced the noble name of King. Clovis was bad enough, but when you read of what some of his descendants did, you begin to have a feeling of respect for him by comparison. When he died, his kingdom was divided among his four sons, a very bad arrangement, causing continual strife and discord, but which was the only one known in those times. Each one had a different portion assigned him, and was called by the name of his capital—King of Metz, Orleans, Paris or Soissons. But they soon began to fall by violence, and leave their places to others.

When the first one died, queen Clotilda took his three orphan sons under her care, hoping to see them one day restored to their father's dominions. But two of her remaining sons, having obtained possession of the young princes, sent a messenger to her with a sword and a pair of scissors, asking which she would choose for them, it being understood that shaving their

heads was the same as disgracing them and making it forever impossible for them to reign. She answered passionately that she would rather see them dead than degraded; and before she had time to change her mind or do anything for their rescue, one of their uncles killed the eldest two by thrusting his dagger into their sides as they clung to his knees for mercy. The youngest was forcibly carried away by some kind-hearted person and kept in a place of security; but when he grew up, being weary of the awful scenes of blood and cruelty which were all that he knew of life, he went into a monastery, cut off his long hair with his own hands, and thus saved his uncles the trouble of killing him.

Clotaire, the youngest son of Clovis, was finally left in possession of all his father's dominions, and at his death the kingdom was again divided among his four sons, with the same results—a ferocious struggle for the supreme power. The country of Austrasia, belonging to the East Franks, and of Neustria, belonging to the West Franks, now began to have a separate history. Between these two a great rivalry arose, and they were often at war with one another. It is in connection with this that a story is told so horrible that one could almost wish that it had never been written down; but as it is related in all histories of France, we ought to know something about it.

The king of the Visigoths had two charming and accomplished daughters, one called Brunehaut or Brynhild, married to Sigebert, King of Austrasia, and the other Galswintha, married to his brother Chilperic, King of Neustria. Chilperic cared more for a worthless woman called Fredegonde than he did for his wife;

and in a few weeks the beautiful Galswintha was found strangled in her bed, to please Fredegonde, as every body supposed. The King gave proof of the justice of this suspicion by immediately marrying his wicked favorite, and Brunehaut determined to be revenged on the murderer of her sister.

A long war followed, in the course of which Chilperic was dethroned by his own people and Sigebert elected king in his stead. In the midst of the rejoicings which took place on this occasion, the vile Fredegonde saw her advantage, and arming two of her pages with poisoned daggers, she sent them into his presence on some friendly pretext, and they stabbed him to the heart. She then caused her step-son to be executed on a false accusation, and his young wife to be burned alive; and having by these murders secured the succession to her own son, she ended her days, to all appearance, in perfect prosperity and happiness.

Brunehaut was not so fortunate. After the death of her son she carried on the government in the name of her grandsons, and seems on the whole to have managed it wisely and well, though her ambition had led her to commit fearful crimes. She patronized men of letters and art, who were very rare in those days, and her name was long connected with monuments of energy and wisdom such as roads, bridges and public buildings. After many changes of fortune she fell into the hands of Fredegonde's son, Clotaire, who, after having her led through his camp on a camel exposed to the insults of his brutal soldiers, tied her by one hand, one foot and her long hair to the tail of a wild

horse, where she was soon dragged and trampled to pieces.

Such was the fate of this queen of Austrasia,—a woman eighty years old, the daughter, wife and mother of kings, who had been ruling a kingdom for nearly forty years !

Clotaire, the son of Fredegonde, was now proclaimed king of Austrasia as well as Neustria, and thus his mother's desire was accomplished, though she did not live to see it. His son Dagobert was the only king of his race after Clovis who deserves to be remembered. He seems to have been not quite so wicked as the rest, and far superior to them in mental ability. His private life was so bad that he is said to have had three wives at once; he caused the murder of his young nephew, and ordered nine thousand unfortunate beings who had fled to him for refuge from cruelty at home, and to whom he had offered an asylum, to be massacred because he did not know how to feed them or where to put them. Yet still we must give him his due. He did something toward establishing law and order in a time when such things had been almost forgotten, and was so much better than most who had gone before, and abler than any who came after him, that by comparison with the rest we must rank him, next to Clovis, as the greatest man of his own race.

After him comes a miserable succession of nobodies—phantom kings, as some writers call them—without power or influence, and possessing nothing of royalty but its name. They are called in history the *Fainéants* or do-nothings; but as every country must have some sort of government, the place of authority was

taken by a very remarkable set of men called Mayors of the Palace, a title at first meaning nothing more than the Latin *Major-domus*, or steward. They tried their utmost to keep the young princes from ever growing to be men in anything but appearance, and encouraged them in habits of vice and indolence, which destroyed their health so that few of them reached the age of manhood. One of these Mayors, Pepin d'Heristal, held the real power during the reigns of four shadow-kings, who were more fortunate than the "Six Boy-kings" of England in having a wise and able man to take the reins of government from their feeble hands.

- ✦ His first business on coming into office was to bring under one government the two countries called Austrasia and Neustria, both occupied by Franks, but differing much from each other. The Austrasian, or Eastern Franks, were almost wholly German in their customs, feelings, and language. The Neustrian Franks, on the contrary, were few in number compared with the old Roman Gauls, among whom they had settled, who clung to their ancient government and language. Pepin was an Austrasian, and, after much fighting, at last gained the battle of Testry, which established his power over both countries. "The Franks under Pepin," says a great modern writer, "seem to have conquered Gaul a second time." From this time his authority was undisputed. He had, under the title of Duke of France and Mayor of the Palace, the full control of both king and country, made war or peace at his will, and carried on the government quite independently of the long-haired idler who was amus-

ing himself with games or dogs at his country-house.

He kept up appearances, however. Once a year he would have the so-called king taken from his nest, splendidly dressed, and placed in a magnificent car drawn by oxen; and thus, with his long hair and beard floating in the wind, the descendant of Clovis would be paraded through the streets of Paris and conducted to a hall where an assembly of his own nobles and of foreign ambassadors was waiting to receive him. He was then seated on a golden throne and made to repeat a few sentences which he had learned by heart or which were whispered to him by the attendants; then he was carried back in the same stately manner in which he had come, to his country villa, there to spend another year in vice and idleness.

But the time was soon coming when he was to be relieved from even this exertion. When Pepin d'Heristal died, he left a son Charles, afterwards called Martel, who was quite able to carry out his father's enterprises. He was just twenty-five years old, in the full vigor of health and strength, and ready for any adventure which might offer itself. He first marched against the Neustrians, who had elected a rival Mayor of the Palace, and set up a rival king; and having defeated them at Soissons, the old battle-field of Clovis, he was able to turn his attention to a more dangerous enemy.

About a hundred years before this time, the Arabian Mahomet had set up a new religion which had been eagerly adopted by large numbers of people in Asia and the northern part of Africa; and a little before the death of Pepin, these Mahometans or Saracens, as

they were then called, had conquered Spain and established a powerful kingdom there. It would have been a terrible thing if these enemies of true religion had gained a foothold in France, for they were famous fighters, and were pretty sure to drive out either Christianity or Christians from any country they took possession of. So you will readily believe that when it was known that a body of them had crossed the Pyrenees, and settled in Septimania, all Gaul shook in its shoes.

Charles was equal to the occasion. He collected an army and marched southward at once, meeting the Saracens on a field near the city of Tours. Here the two armies lay quiet for a week, looking at each other. Why they waited we don't know, for they were apparently all ready to fight; but perhaps they were dimly conscious that the fate of Europe hung on the battle that was to come, and did not wish to risk a failure though too much haste. We can imagine the grim Franks, in their heavy armor, looking out from under an iron helmet with disdain upon the turbaned heads of the Moslems, while the latter, whose eyes delighted in bright colors, thought the battle-array of the Franks very barbarous beside their own gorgeous dress. The Saracens were the first to make the attack. They rushed furiously against the Christians with a rage which seemed as if it must bear down all before it, but their keen swords could not pierce the iron armor; while the heavy battle-ax of the Frank crashed fearfully down upon the soft turbans of his slighter foe, and gradually the invader gave way; Abdel Rhaman, the Saracen commander, was killed,

and when darkness had fallen on the long, long day, both armies withdrew from the field. Charles had well earned the surname of Martel, or The Hammer, bestowed upon him by common consent in that age and retained by all succeeding ones in grateful remembrance of his victory. He had indeed *hammered* the Saracens; the Crescent bowed down before the Cross, and Europe was saved. If there had been a poet in Charles's ranks he might have sung as Sir Walter Scott did about the battle of Flodden—

“Then did their loss his foemen know;
Their king, their lords, their mightiest low,
They melted from the field as snow,
When streams are swollen and south winds blow,
Dissolves in silent dew.”

In the morning the Franks started out bravely to begin again, but no answering host advanced to give them battle. The white tents of the Moslems were spread out before them—empty. In the silence of night the enemy had stolen away and were retreating at full speed towards Narbonne. This strongly fortified town resisted all the efforts of Charles to take it, and remained in the hands of the Saracens until it was taken from them long afterwards by his son.

That son, called Pepin the Short, was the first of his family to assume in name what they had long possessed in fact, the style and title of king. At Charles Martel's death the throne had been vacant for some years, but he had not thought it worth while to look up another puppet to place upon it. Pepin, however (or Pippin, as the Germans called him), was more prudent. He did not think the time had come when


it would be safe to make such an important change as to call himself king, so he hunted up another forlorn Merovingian from the convent where he had been shut up, let his hair grow, and called him King Childeric III.

Pepin was acute enough to know that unless he could get the church on his side he would have a great deal of trouble in keeping his kingdom, so he sent ambassadors to Rome to ask the Pope which ought to be king—the one who had the name, or the one who has the power and exercised the duties of a king. Pope Zacharias had already had a private conference with Pepin's friend, St. Boniface, and had made up his mind what to say. So he answered, "The one who has the power;" and Pepin lost no time in making use of the permission. St. Boniface, who was a really devout and good man, and a missionary among the Germans, anointed him with holy oil from the vial used at the coronation of Clovis; Childeric was shaven again and sent back to his cloister, and the first of the Carlovingian Kings was seated firmly on the throne of France.

The name of this family comes from Carolus, the Latin for Charles, and might therefore more properly be spelt Carolingian, but we take it as we find it. The Germans called them Karlings, or sons of Karl, and this form is occasionally used by English writers also.

CHAPTER V.

PEPIN AND CHARLEMAGNE.—752–814.



S was to be expected, the son of the great Charles, and the father of Charles the Great (for such was Pepin), did not let the grass grow under his heels as long as there was anything to be done. He attacked the Saracens in the south and the Bretons in the west, driving out the one, and reducing the other to obedience, and more than once went into Italy to help the Pope against the Lombards or Long-beards, who threatened to destroy the city of Rome. Having conquered them he made the pontiff a present of their country, which was nearly the same as the modern Lombardy. This is called "Pepin's Donation," and was the foundation of the long friendship which existed between the popes and the kings of France.

A story is told of Pepin which shows the general opinion of his strength and courage. Soon after he was made king, he was looking on with his nobles at a fight between a lion and a bull, for in those days such animals were kept on purpose to have them fight together for the amusement of human—not humane—beings. The bull was getting the worst of it, when the king called out: "Who dares to separate them?" No one offering to do this, he jumped into the arena and cut off the heads of both with his sword. "Now," said he, "am I not worthy to be called your king?"

Nearly his whole reign was filled up with warlike

enterprises, and when he died he left his kingdom to his two sons, Charles and Carloman, but fortunately for the nation this divided rule did not last long. Carloman died within a few years, leaving the undisputed throne to his brother Charles, whom we shall henceforth speak of under his best known name of Charlemagne, which means Charles the Great. It shows how much more civilized the world was getting in those days, that nobody thought it necessary to plunge a knife into the heart of Carloman's two sons, or to shave their heads and make monks of them. They went off quietly with their mother to Lombardy, where they were kindly welcomed by its king, and allowed to live at his court.

It was indeed a great man who now sat upon the throne of France. Whether we think of him as the conqueror of mighty nations, as the wise ruler of his own, or as the friend and patron of learning at a time when almost all knowledge of books was confined to the monks, we must still admire his wonderful energy, his splendid military genius, and the far-sighted wisdom which enabled him to see that the real greatness of a country consisted not in its conquests, but in the instruction and elevation of its people.

As it would take too long to speak of all the warlike expeditions of Charlemagne, of which there were said to be fifty-three, I can only tell you in general that he attacked his neighbors on every side, and was in the long run successful everywhere, except against the Moors, then inhabitants of Spain. He advanced with a grand flourish into their country, and succeeded in bringing the northern part to submis-

sion, but finally judged it best to return to his own land. To do this he had to cross the mountainous district in which the Pyrenees are situated, and which was occupied by people called Basques, who were friendly to the Saracens and hated the Franks. The main body of his army advanced safely through the mountain passes, but as the rear-guard were traversing that of Roncesvalles, they suddenly found a great storm of rocks, stones, trunks of trees and other heavy things coming down on their heads; many of them were crushed to death, or fell down the precipice and were dashed in pieces on the rocks below, while the Basques, taking advantage of their confusion, rushed upon them and killed every one that was left.

Many romantic stories are told about this battle, as it is called, although the Franks had little chance to strike back; and a knight named Roland is especially mentioned as being the bravest of the brave. In these legends a friend of his, called Oliver, is represented as being associated with him in all sorts of impossible adventures, and both performed such wonders of valor that nobody could decide which deserved the most praise; but though these are very pleasant to read about, we cannot think of them as facts.

In all other directions Charlemagne was successful. He conquered many nations in Germany, and, among others, the Saxons, with whom he had a war that lasted more than thirty years; but though often driven back, he never gave up his purpose, and they finally submitted. Their most famous chief was Witikind, who was converted to Christianity during this war, and from

being one of the fiercest and most bloody-minded of heathens, became such a good man that some people called him a saint. Charlemagne professed to carry on this war principally for the sake of converting the Saxons, and no doubt his soldiers did good service in protecting the faithful missionaries who were engaged in this work; but when we read that he had four thousand helpless prisoners massacred at once, in revenge for a victory they had obtained over the Franks, it does not seem as if his Christianity had done much for his own character.

For thirty-two years after the beginning of his reign, Charlemagne called himself only king of the Franks and Lombards, but in the year 800 he received a still grander title. He went in great state to visit Pope Leo III. at Rome, and as he was kneeling on Christmas Day before the high altar in the Church of St. Peter, the Pope placed an imperial crown upon his head, and all the vast multitude of people present shouted, "Long life and victory to Charles Augustus, crowned by God, the great and pacific emperor of the Romans." Charlemagne professed that this was an utter surprise to him—that he was unworthy of it, and so forth; and one writer goes so far as to say that if he had known what the Pope was going to do he would not have gone to the church that day; but this is a little too absurd to be believed. No doubt he knew all about it, and liked it too; and he immediately set up a court as much like the one at Constantinople as he could, and even had some thoughts of marrying the old Empress Irene, and so of adding the Empire of the East to that of the West; but just at this time Irene,

who had murdered her own son in order to become Empress, was in her turn deposed, and Charlemagne's ambition in that direction bore no fruits.

But everywhere else he was supreme. One by one the nations of Germany had submitted to him, and France was as firmly bound together as it is to-day. Outside of his own dominions, all foreign princes were proud to have his friendship, and vied with each other in the splendor of their embassies and the magnificence of their gifts. The caliph Haroun Al Raschid, the hero of the Arabian Nights, sent him some wonderful presents; among others, a clock that struck the hours, an ape and an elephant—all new to the eyes of Western Europe.

The young Egbert of England came to the court of the great monarch to be instructed in the arts of refinement to which as yet his own country was a stranger; and who knows but that he may have picked up, either from example or in conversation, some ideas which were of use to him in bringing into one the seven kingdoms of his little island?

We should do great injustice to Charlemagne if we allowed the recollection of his military glory to put out of sight the two facts which do him even more honor—his success as a legislator, and his devotion to learning, so rare in those ignorant times. We should all of us have enjoyed looking on while what was called "The School of the Palace," was holding one of its morning sessions. We should see the great emperor seated on a highly ornamented chair which served as his throne, with his sons and daughters near him, and the nobles, such as were allowed the privi-

lege, a little lower down in the room; there standing among them we should see the good monk Alcuin, whom Charlemagne had caused to come from England expressly for this purpose, lecturing, as we should call it now, on the various subjects which were then considered interesting; such as grammar, rhetoric, astronomy and theology.

Besides these lectures there must have been times when the young people were taught reading and writing, both of which accomplishments were extremely rare in those days. It is said that the Emperor tried hard to learn to write, but never made very good work of it, though he carried tablets in his bosom on which to practice at odd times. His fingers were too much used to holding the sword to be very skillful with the pen. Reading, too, was much more difficult before the art of printing was invented, and as all books were copied by hand with a pen, they were scarce and expensive.

Charlemagne built himself a beautiful palace at Aix la Chapelle, in Germany, which was named after Aix in Provence, because of the mineral springs found there. He took great delight in these, and would have sometimes as many as a hundred persons bathing with him at one time. The name La Chapelle was added to distinguish this city from the southern Aix, and came from a fine cathedral which he built there. The palace was adorned with all sorts of splendid things, taken from cities which Charlemagne had conquered, just as Napoleon afterwards enriched Paris with the spoils of Rome; but all are gone now. You can still see the cathedral, however, and in it is pre-

served the chair which the Emperor sat in, both living and dead, for when he died,

“No useless coffin enclosed his breast.”

His corpse was dressed in imperial robes, with a crown on his head, a golden sword by his side, and a golden copy of the gospels in his hand; and thus, sitting on his throne, he was placed in the tomb. Nearly two hundred years afterward, the Emperor Otho III. took it into his head to remove the royal remains, which were found in a good state of preservation. It seems a pity that he could not have let the dead man rest quietly in his tomb, after having been so constantly busy in his life time.

Charlemagne died in the year 814, exactly one hundred years after the death of his great grandfather, Pepin d’Heristal, having reigned fourteen years as emperor, and not far from fifty in all. He was seventy years old.

In his love of learning, he reminds us of Alfred the Great, of England, but having been so much a man of war in the early part of his life he never became as well informed as Alfred, who was always a student. During the time when he was comparatively peaceful—that is, after he became emperor—he tried to get all the knowledge he could by having people read aloud to him at his meals, so as never to lose a moment of time; but at that age it was slow work. In his intense energy and activity, and power of application to business, he may be compared to the first Napoleon. His moral character fell far below our standard of right at the present day, and his cruelty to the Saxons, under the pretext of religious zeal, is a dark

stain on his name; but such crimes were looked upon by even the good men of his own day with great indulgence, and we must not judge him from our own standpoint.

In person Charlemagne was tall and stout, with a round head, a long nose, large, keen eyes, and a thick neck. This, which is told us by Eginhard, who was educated in the palace and has left a valuable account of what went on in his time, is all we know about it; but we imagine a noble and commanding countenance, and, according to the custom of the time, a full, flowing beard. It is certain that he impressed with awe all that came near him. He remained to the end of his life a German in feeling and habits, and though France was the main seat of his empire, he seems to approach more nearly to the emperor of Germany than to the kings of his own country.

Charlemagne must have had some fun about him, too. He despised foppery in dress, and once when he saw a party of young nobles overdressed he took them on a long ride with him through rain and mud, until their fine clothes were drenched and spoiled. Then he pretended not to notice it, and made them dine with him in the same condition. After that they probably kept a sharp look-out, and saved their finery to appear in when he was away.

The emperor himself took care to set an example of the simplicity he liked to see in the young people around him. He wore a linen undergarment, woven by his own daughters, and a woolen tunic and breeches, over which, when out of doors, he threw a long blue cloak. Thick shoes, leggings made of bright-colored

bands crossed over one another, and a broad leather belt, to which his good sword Joyeuse always hung, completed his costume. The ladies of the court were allowed more liberty than the men. They wore silken tunics with long, flowing sleeves, and had their garments trimmed with costly furs.

The great mass of the people was then, as for many hundred years afterward, sunk in ignorance and ground down by poverty. Famine and wretchedness were so constantly their companions that it did not even occur to them to complain, and there was no one to come to their help. They toiled hopelessly from the cradle to the grave, happy if Fate had placed them under a master who left them a whole skin, and required nothing more from them than the unremitting service of a lifetime.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LATER CARLOVINGIANS.—814–987.



HARLEMAGNE had portioned out his empire among his three sons, giving to each what he considered a just share; but to his great grief two of them died before him, leaving only Louis to succeed to the vast inheritance. This prince, whom French historians call "Le Debonnaire," or the Good Natured, and Latin ones "The Pious," had already had some experience in governing, or trying to govern; for when he was only three years old, his father made him

king of Aquitaine, a country in the south of France, and the baby-monarch, who was carried in his cradle to his new dominions, was on entering them dressed in a little suit of armor, and led through the streets on horseback, so that the people might pay him homage. When he grew up he did not show anything of his father's ambitious disposition, being too truly pious to want to make himself great at any one else's expense; and the first years of his reign exhibit a love of simple justice which was not often seen in that rude and selfish age.

After the death of his first wife, Louis was persuaded to marry a beautiful but unprincipled woman called Judith, and out of this marriage sprang all his other misfortunes. He had divided the empire, as was usually done, among his three sons by his first wife; and all recognized this division as just and proper. But Judith thought that her son, afterwards known as Charles the Bald, ought also to have a share; and to please her, Louis made a kingdom for him out of some of the countries already given to his older brothers.

The consequences of this unwise action were such as might have been expected in those stormy times. The defrauded sons rebelled (though they did not yet possess the kingdoms, and could not have them till after their father was dead); and from that time to the end of his life, the reign of Louis is one scene of discord, humiliation and misery. At one time we find the sons getting the better of their father, and imposing on him every mortification that they could inflict in the way of imprisonment and public disgrace; at another, there is a reaction against this unnatural war-

fare, and Louis is restored to his throne by outside help. Once everything was prepared for a battle the next day; when, on rising in the morning, Louis found that all his principal nobles, with the soldiers under their command, had silently gone over to the enemy during the night. The place where this shameful treachery took place was from that time called "The Field of Lying."

Louis died of a broken heart, and the next year his sons fought a bloody battle one against another at Fontenay, where it is said that eighty thousand men perished. Soon after this a treaty was made at Verdun, by which the empire was parceled out among the brothers, Judith's son, Charles the Bald, being made king of France. By the death of his brothers he became also for a short time Emperor of Germany, but when he died, the vast empire which it had cost Charlemagne nearly his whole life to establish, was broken up into its natural divisions of France, Germany and Italy.

While these events were taking place, other influences were at work destined in the end to be of great importance to France. Far to the north, in those countries called by the general name of Scandinavia, lived a fierce race of pirates, who had begun even before the death of Charlemagne to make their appearance on his coasts. He had defended himself against them; but under the reigns of his weak son and quarrelsome grandsons, these dreaded sea-kings, as they called themselves, sailed boldly up the Seine, carried their boats across from one river to another, and laid waste the country wherever they went. In the time of Charles

the Bald they attacked Paris and plundered its rich churches and abbeys. The king, instead of fighting them, gave them money to go away, which of course only encouraged them to come again the next year; and France grew to dread their approach like that of a pestilence.

You may form some idea of the recreations of their playful moments, from the fact that one more humane than the rest forbade his companions to pitch children at each other and catch them on the points of their pikes, as had been their custom. From this he was called by the endearing name of "The Saviour of Children."

Charles the Bald left one son, Louis II., called Le Begue, or The Stammerer. After him came in quick succession his three sons, Louis III., Carloman, and Charles the Simple. The latter, weak and incapable, was entirely under the control of one of his great nobles, Robert, Count of Paris. By his advice, Charles offered to negotiate with the leader of the Northmen, who was called Rolf or Rollo, and who, though a pagan, had the Christian virtue of keeping his word. A treaty was made between them by which it was agreed that Rollo should marry Charles's daughter, Gisela, and receive a part of Neustria as a permanent possession. In return he consented to become a Christian and to refrain from committing any depredations on the soil of France outside of the territory granted to him, which was named Normandy, from the Northmen who settled there. This Rollo was great-great-grandfather of William the Norman, conqueror of England.

Rollo did as he had promised. He not only let alone what did not belong to him, but proved a just and wise ruler in his own country. When he was about to take the oath of allegiance to Charles which was included in the conditions of the treaty, he was informed that it was absolutely necessary that he should comply with the usual form by kissing the foot of his sovereign. As no persuasion could induce him to do this, he was finally allowed to perform the ceremony by proxy, that is, to send some one in his place. But the rude soldier who was deputed for this purpose was equally unwilling to go through this form of submission, and instead of kneeling down to touch the king's foot with his lips, he seized it in his hand and lifted it to his mouth, overturning poor Charles, throne and all, amid the loud laughter of the coarse Normans and the suppressed anger of the Frenchmen. The king dared not resent the insult, but passed it off as a joke, glad to get into his chair again with whole bones.

After the death of Charles the Simple, who is supposed to have been murdered in the castle of Peronne by one of his own nobles, another lord called Hugh the Great, (son of the count of Paris), might have made himself king without opposition from any one, if he had so chosen; but he was too prudent or too patriotic to do this, and sent for Charles's son, Louis d'Outremer, or "Louis from beyond the Sea," whom he placed on the throne. The mother of Louis was a sister of Athelstan, king of England, and therefore a granddaughter of Alfred the Great. The remaining reigns of the Carlovingian kings are nothing but a

series of struggles between them and the nobles for power. Louis IV. was a prince of some ability, but he could not stem the tide which had now grown too strong for him. His son Lothaire and his grandson Louis V. had short reigns which resulted in nothing, the latter receiving the title of *Le Fainéant* or Do-Nothing, not so much as a term of reproach as because his short reign of one year gave him no chance to accomplish anything. Although he left no children, an heir to the crown existed in the person of the Duke of Lorraine, brother of King Lothaire, but his claim was set aside by the unanimous voice of the nobles, who chose one of their own number, Hugh Capet, son of Hugh the Great, to sit upon the throne of Charlemagne.

Thus ended the line of Carlovingian Kings, who began so gloriously and finished so sadly. Who could have guessed, when the great Emperor was placed in his stately tomb, that in less than two hundred years his place would be filled by a stranger? And yet it was better for France that it should be so. The well-meaning but helpless monarchs who pass in a sad procession before us could do nothing to protect their subjects from each other, and the nobles exercised an independent authority over those under them which made the name of king almost a mockery. To understand how this state of things came about, requires some knowledge of an institution called the Feudal System, which I will try to explain to you.

In the early times, when a barbarian chief took possession of a country and turned out its inhabitants, it was the custom for him to divide the land among the

principal men who had helped him to conquer it, on condition that they should be always ready to go with him to war when he called upon them, and to help in some other ways, according to the agreement they made with him. This was called owing allegiance to him, and he was called the liege-lord, while the one who received the land was called his vassal, and the property itself a fief.

After a time, when it became inconvenient to take care of so much land, the person who had received it from the chief, or king, divided it into smaller parts, and gave it to other people called freeholders, on the same terms. But as these again might be called upon at any time to go with their liege-lord to battle, they had under them a still lower class called serfs, who tilled the ground, and were not required to go to war unless some great or unusual event made it necessary. Thus there were four very distinct classes in the Feudal System: first, the king; then the great nobles who received their land directly from him, and the lesser ones to whom they granted it in turn; next the lower vassals, who were generally plain farmers; and lastly, the serfs. It was natural that in the course of time many of the great vassals, who owned perhaps more land than the king himself, should become impatient of being bound to serve him, and should try to make themselves independent, and this gave the kings of France much trouble, until, as happened in the end, one fief after another fell into their hands, and they found themselves sole lords over the whole country.

As the vassals, or tenants, paid no rent for their lands, it was necessary to have some form which should

show that these lands really belonged to the superior or feudal lord. This was done by what was called homage, or an acknowledgment, at certain times, of the condition of a vassal. We have seen how this ceremony was performed in the case of poor Simple Charles, who so well deserved his name. In later times the form was different. Instead of kissing his liege-lord's foot, the vassal placed his folded hands within those of his superior, the latter thus taking possession, by a symbol or sign, of all that the other was enjoying the use of.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST CAPETIANS.—907⁸—1108.



It is well to understand at first setting out, that the only part of France entirely subject to Hugh Capet was a small district around Paris. The rest of the kingdom really belonged to various counts and dukes, those of Normandy, Brittany, Burgundy, and so on, who owed allegiance to the King of France, but ruled their own dominions without interference from him, acknowledging his lordship over them only by doing homage for the countries they held by his permission.

The feeling entertained towards Hugh by other nobles who imagined that they had as good a right to the throne as he had, is shown by the answer made to him by an insolent noble who had taken possession of the country around Tours without his consent. "Who

made you count?" he inquired. "Who made you king?" retorted the other, and the king was too cautious to press the matter further.

Hugh reigned only nine years, but long enough to acquire and well enough to preserve the respect and admiration of all his vassals. He was especially devoted to the church, giving up to it several rich abbeys belonging to his own family, and thus making friends of the clergy, who bestowed on him the title of "Defender of the Church." He very wisely had his son Robert joined with him as king during his own life-time, and acknowledged by the nobles, so that there could be no doubt about the succession. Such was the first of the Capetian Kings, some of whose descendants are living at this moment, and perhaps still hope to occupy the throne of France.

Robert the Pious, as he was called, was a gentle and peace-loving man, and yet destined, as such men are apt to be if they become kings, to a stormy reign. He had married his cousin Bertha, to whom he was most tenderly attached; but though the relationship between them was very distant, the pope ordered them to separate, because such marriages are forbidden in the Romish Church. Robert protested in vain against this act of injustice, and it was not until after the pope had made both himself and Bertha very wretched that he consented to a separation. He then married a frivolous and light-minded woman called Constance, who hated his pious ways, and would have liked to see him as vain and selfish as she was. Poor King Robert was so much in dread of her scoldings that he tried to conceal his good deeds from her as if they had been crimes.

She was always spying about to see if she missed anything from his dress, for if he had no money, he would give away the very clothes he had on. Once when he came home from mass, he found that his wife had trimmed his lance with silver ornaments. Instead of being gratified by this, he instantly began to think whether there was not some one to whom that silver might be useful. Just then a beggar came along and the king sent for a tool to take off the ornaments, which he gave to the beggar, telling him to take good care that the queen knew nothing of it. When Constance came in she exclaimed loudly at seeing the lance stripped of its silver, but the king declared that he did not know how it happened. With all his good qualities, it seems that he hadn't the courage to tell the truth.

At another time, when he was at supper with her, and was feeding a poor man under the table (for he insisted on having his doors open to all who chose to ask a meal), the beggar cut off a gold tag weighing six ounces that hung at the king's knee, and made off with it. When they rose from the table Constance instantly missed it, and went into one of her furies. The king answered with great coolness that it was doubtless more needful to the one that took it than it was to himself. A robber was once cutting off the heavy gold fringe from his mantle as he knelt in church, but though Robert knew perfectly well what the man was about, he said nothing until he had taken half of it; then he remarked mildly, "That will do, my friend; now go, and leave the rest for some one else."

You may imagine that such a man was somewhat of

a trial to a foolish woman whose mind was set on dress and fashion, but her ways were still more trying to him. A crowd of young nobles had followed her from Toulouse, and scandalized the grave people of the northern court, one of whom thus discourses about them: "Their manners and dress were disorderly. . . . In the middle part of their heads they had no hair, and their beards were cut in the shape of clowns'. Their leggings and buskins were shamefully fashioned. . . . But oh, grief! their abominable examples were immediately copied by the whole race of Frenchmen!"

Robert was passionately fond of music, sang well, and wrote many hymns. The queen, thinking that she might turn his musical and poetical talent to some account, asked him to compose a song in her honor. So he sang a Latin hymn beginning, "Oh, Constantia Martyrum"—"Oh, constancy of the martyrs!" and as she heard her own name in it she was quite satisfied, and did not know that he was making fun of her.

In the early part of King Robert's reign a remarkable state of feeling prevailed all over the Christian world. From a passage in the Book of Revelation people had drawn the conclusion that the world would come to an end a thousand years after Christ; and as the year 1000 drew near, their minds grew more and more agitated. It was not strange that a feeling of terror should prevail at the thought of an approaching judgment, for never since the time of Christ had there been such frightful wickedness in the earth. Even the Church, which ought to have been the guardian of all that was good, and to have shone out like

a light in the darkness, had become so corrupt that the behavior of the monks and clergy was a dishonor to religion; and though there were noble exceptions, it was known to all how far many of them had fallen below the true standard. But now all were aroused; men gave up their business and prostrated themselves in the churches; property of all kinds, including money, jewels, houses and lands, was hastily given to the cathedrals and monasteries, in the hope that such sacrifices might purchase favor at the great day, and the trembling sinners waited with awe for the end to come.

When the last day of the thousand years had drawn to its close and a new century dawned upon them, the people began to take heart again. For a while the excitement was still kept up, under the idea that there might be some mistake in the reckoning; but gradually the terrified spirits of men grew calmer, and they returned slowly to their old habits. The terror they had felt, however, was not without its good effect. For a long time there was less violence; many monasteries and churches were built, and the clergy reformed, to some extent, their evil lives.

As was usual in times of great religious excitement, the enthusiasm of piety sought relief in the most dreadful persecutions, in which King Robert joined, no doubt believing that he was doing his duty. The unhappy Jews, always the first mark for such attacks, were hunted out from their hiding places, imprisoned, tortured, robbed, and put to the most cruel deaths, all under the mask of love to God. When all who could not escape had suffered thus, the rage of persecution

took a new turn, and seized upon some heretics at Orleans, one of whom had been confessor to Queen Constance. As he was led to the stake, the queen stood in the place where he was to pass, and struck him so furiously in the face with her iron-pointed staff that one of his eyes was dashed from its socket. A pleasant woman, this, to pass one's life with !

In the last year of King Robert's reign, and for two years afterwards, a famine prevailed in France, the details of which equal in horror anything that we read of. The harvests failed for three years in succession, and the destitution of the poorer classes reached such a pass that human flesh became a well-known article of food. The graveyards were robbed, corpses were ravenously devoured, and an inn-keeper was burnt alive for having killed nearly fifty of his guests and used their bodies for food. It was said that people set traps in the woods to catch little children, so that their flesh might be eaten. It was not safe to travel in the highways, lest some wretch, stronger than yourself, might fall upon and kill you. As always happens in times of famine, pestilence was added to its torments. When food is deficient or poor in quality it causes sickness, and these poor unfortunates would sometimes mix powdered chalk with the little flour they had to make it go further; but there was still one more horror to be added to the list. There was a famine among the wild beasts, too, and the wolves grew so fierce and bold that they would roam through the country, attracted by the unburied corpses, and when these had been devoured, they began to attack human beings, who, weakened by

hunger, were not always able to defend themselves.

In the fourth year there came a change. The crop, which the people had managed to sow in spite of the scarcity of grain, was abundant, and prosperity returned to the country. While men's hearts were still in the softened state brought about by gratitude for deliverance from danger, a very singular law, called the "Peace of God," was passed by the church, with consent of the king. This forbade the shedding of blood, whether in revenge or open warfare; it exhorted all men to live according to the religion of Christ, to use no violence one towards another, and to be just and merciful to all.

This law was hailed with delight by all classes, but it could not last long. Oppression and outrage became common again, and murders went on as before. Then another experiment was tried, called the "Truce of God," which worked better. From Wednesday evening in each week until Monday morning of the next, and all through Lent and Advent, men were to give up stabbing and mangling one another; and from being restricted in this way, they grew somewhat out of the habit of violence, and the condition of society was changed for the better. These things may give you an idea of the simplicity of both rulers and people in the eleventh century.

Two very long reigns followed that of King Robert the Pious, occupying nearly eighty years between them,—that of his son, Henry the First and his grandson, Philip the First. Henry seems not to have been much distinguished in any way; Philip was a man of whom we know little but what is bad. It was in his

reign that the first of those wonderful Crusades was undertaken, the object of which was to recover Jerusalem from the Turks. Peter the Hermit, the monk whose zeal enlisted immense armies under the standard of the Cross, was a native of France, and by far the larger number of the brave chiefs who led their soldiers to Palestine were Frenchmen. As it was the custom in those days for kings to march at the head of their armies, this mighty host would naturally have looked to Philip as their leader ; but besides his being very lazy and self-indulgent, he was known to live in so scandalous a manner that he would not have dared to offer himself for such a position. So the Crusaders went without him ; and when in 1099, the Holy City was taken by the triumphant Christians, Philip shared in none of the glory of the achievement.


Towards the end of his long reign of nearly fifty years, he professed to feel sorry for his misdeeds, though he did not reform his life; and by way of atonement he ordered that his body should be buried in an obscure country church, because he was not worthy to be buried with the kings of his race in the Cathedral of St. Denis. It would have been better if his repentance had taken the form of forsaking his sins, and atoning for wrongs by undoing them.

There have been few periods in the history of France which present so dreary a picture to our view as does this reign of the first Philip. To be a baron or "noble" was only another name for enjoying the privilege of living at other people's expense. These nobles built strong castles which defied the attack of even the king's armies, and became too often mere

dens of robbers. Men who preferred living on the fruits of their neighbors' industry to earning their own bread, had only to start out at the head of a body of retainers whom they kept for the purpose, rob and murder travelers on the public roads, and take by force the cattle which a poor laborer had been toiling for years to buy, or the harvest on which he depended for the support of his family, to live at ease and bring up a family of sons to do just as their fathers had done. But a brighter day was about to dawn on the unhappy country, and a reign of peace and order to succeed this one of dire confusion and misery.

CHAPTER VIII.

LOUIS VI. AND HIS SON.—1108–1180.

T was fortunate for the country that the son of Philip the First was so different from Philip himself as to be called, in his young days, the Wide-Awake. In his later years this surname was changed to Le Gros, or The Fat, by which he is known in history; but in spite of his unwieldy size, he was the most active and vigorous king that France had seen for more than a hundred years.

To improve the condition of the people generally, it was necessary that he should begin by controlling the great nobles; and as he was not strong enough alone to accomplish this, he showed his wisdom by calling to his assistance the two classes who were the most inter-

ested in his doing it—the clergy and the common people. He encouraged the latter to form themselves into associations called *communes*, (very different from the lawless rabble who have taken that name at different times in the present century), and under promise of his protection they were glad to fight for him against the robber-barons who had so long preyed upon them. The property belonging to the Church consisted mostly of lands which the bishops rented out to small farmers, or which were tilled by their own serfs; and in furnishing these men with weapons and sending them out to fight the king's battles, the clergy were strengthening their own power, and saving their own possessions from destruction.

So all worked together, and in a few years Louis had put down the most of the robber-barons, and let them see that he was a king in fact as well as in name; one by one they yielded to him, though generally not until after hard fighting and a good deal of boasting on their part. Before they were all conquered the king had grown so enormously stout, in spite of his active habits, that he could scarcely mount his horse, and many a man would have thought this a good excuse for staying at home and sending somebody else to do the fighting; but Louis, though he had no Benjamin Franklin to tell him, "When you want a thing done, do it yourself," acted upon this plan, and was always to be found in the front of an attack. He had the advantage of a very wise and able minister called Suger, whose advice was most valuable both to him and to his son, Louis the Seventh, who succeeded him. The latter, who, though he reigned forty-three

years, is always spoken of as "*Le Jeune*,"—"The Young"—had just married a young heiress called Eleanor of Aquitaine, and was hastening towards Paris when news was brought him of his father's death. He was startled at finding himself suddenly placed in so responsible a position; but he had the good Suger to lean upon, and naturally expected a happy and prosperous life. It is fortunate that we can not see what is before us; for if the poor young king could have known half the disappointments and mortifications that were in store for him he would hardly have dared to begin his reign at all. His first trouble came from a neighbor who was very apt to make trouble in those days—the Pope.

From the days of Gregory the Seventh (Hildebrand,) the popes had been growing stronger and more able to do as they pleased; and when one of the bishops in France died, it pleased Pope Innocent the Second to appoint one of his own nephews to fill the place. Louis, young as he was, knew that this was a thing which the Pope had no right to do, and resisted it with all his might, nominating some one else, and declaring that while he was above ground, no Pope should take such a liberty with him. In return, the Pope excommunicated him, which was no light matter at that time; but Louis held out until an accident happened so horrible that it made him almost crazy, and ready to give up to the Pope or any one else.

One of Louis's great vassals having taken the part of the Pope, the king went against him with an army just as his father Louis the Sixth would have done. In the course of the war Louis attacked and took the town of

Vitry, which was set on fire by his troops. Thirteen hundred people—men, women and children—had crowded into the great church to be safe from the soldiers; the flames caught the building, and the whole number perished by this horrible death, while Louis looked on in despair, helpless to save,

It seemed as if the king's heart was broken. He grew wretchedly low-spirited, gave up all the advantages he had gained over his rebellious vassal, and was glad to make peace with the Pope by asking pardon, and allowing Innocent's nephew to be made bishop—a thing he had sworn never to do. Still, all this did not ease his mind; he had broken his oath on the one side, he had made war for three years against His Holiness the Pope on the other. Whichever way he looked, he felt like a miserable sinner; and just at the time when his heart was utterly failing him, a way was opened, as he thought, in which he might atone for all his sins; St. Bernard was stirring up men's minds to go on the second Crusade.

Jerusalem, the holy city, was still in the hands of the Christians, but great outrages had been committed against them in other parts of Palestine, and Edessa, one of their cities, had been taken under circumstances of great cruelty. So when St. Bernard spoke in a great public assembly to the French king and his nobles and to countless thousands who crowded around to hear him, of the duty of Christians in this matter, one long shout arose from all—"The cross! the cross!" Bernard and the monks had prepared beforehand a great quantity of crosses made of red cloth, ready to sew fast to the clothes of those who wished to go on

the crusade; the king, who saw in this the opportunity of easing his burdened soul, was the first to kneel down and receive the sacred symbol; the queen, who was by no means religious, but ready for anything that promised excitement and novelty, insisted upon taking the cross likewise: and after them followed a brilliant throng of nobles, both men and women, and immense numbers of the common people. When all the ready-made crosses had been given away, the saint and the monks who attended him tore their garments in pieces to supply the still increasing demand.

It was in vain that Suger advised the king against this rash undertaking, and tried to persuade him that it was his duty to stay at home and take care of his kingdom. Louis was both ashamed and afraid to draw back, and knowing that his queen would give him no peace if he did not go, raised an army of a hundred thousand fighting men, accompanied, as was then the custom, by another army of hangers-on who did no good and only hindered the march. It seems strange that sensible men should not have known that a rabble of women, children and idlers, who had to be fed and sheltered, was not of any more use on a crusade than it would have been if the kings had been fighting one another at home; but the world in general became insane the moment that Jerusalem was mentioned, and no one dared to stop the crowds who professed to be moved solely by the love of God and a desire to do honor to his cause.

Alas for the vanity of human expectations! the end of the mighty crusade entered upon by that vast host in the pride of their strength and hope, was one of

the most dismal failures recorded in history. Betrayed by the Greek emperor at Constantinople who had promised to help him, obliged to abandon the main body of his army (who were either massacred, forced to turn Mahometans or sold as slaves), and cut to the heart by the misconduct of his wife, who was a woman whom nobody could respect, Louis passed two miserable years in Palestine, ashamed to present himself again before the people of France, who had witnessed his brilliant departure. At length, yielding to the urgent entreaties of Suger, and thinking, perhaps, that Queen Eleanor would behave better at home than she did abroad, he came back to his own country with a scanty band of two or three hundred knights—the sole remnant of the mighty host who had set out with him for Palestine in all the glory of their fresh hopes so short a time before.

Louis returned from misfortune abroad only to fresh misfortune at home. The haughty and insolent Eleanor professed to despise him because he had shown so little wisdom in respect to the crusade, called him a coward, and loudly demanded a divorce. Louis, who was naturally disgusted with her behavior, weakly yielded to this measure, which could not have been accomplished without his consent; and in six weeks he had the mortification of seeing the rich possessions which made up more than half of his own kingdom pass into the hands of his rival, Henry the Second of England, who was quite willing to take Eleanor with all her faults, for the sake of the countries she brought with her. We know from English history how unhappy she made him, but that did not help


Louis, who must have felt that she had outwitted him. Here again he acted against the advice of Suger, who would gladly have persuaded him to overlook what he could not prevent. The faithful minister died before their separation; and it is a proof of the inconsistency of human beings that he was even then meditating another crusade, to be led by himself, which should retrieve the disgrace of the last one!

The rest of Louis's long reign was diversified with frequent quarrels between himself and Henry II., in which the crafty Englishman invariably gained the victory in the end. Louis did what mischief he could by encouraging the frequent rebellions of Henry's sons against their father, but he could not prevent the family of Plantagenet from getting and keeping, in one way or another, a large part of France. Normandy had come to them from William the Conqueror, and the great country or earldom of Anjou from Geoffrey Plantagenet, father of Henry the Second, while Constance of Brittany, who married Henry's son Geoffrey, brought the duchy of Brittany into the family as her marriage portion. With all these slices taken off, but very little of what we now call France remained in the hands of Louis the Seventh.

It was in his reign that the oriflamme was first used at the head of the French armies. This was a red silk banner with tongues or flames of gold upon it, and had belonged to the Cathedral of St. Denis. Louis took a fancy to it and adopted it as the national flag of France, where it continued in use for centuries.

CHAPTER IX.

PHILIP AUGUSTUS. LOUIS VIII.—1180—1226.

HILIP the Second, son of Louis the Seventh, received from his father the name of Dieu-donné, or God-given, in token of the pleasure felt at his birth. It is uncertain how he came by that of Augustus, but it has clung firmly to him from his own time to this. Although only fifteen years old at the time of his father's death, he assumed at once the position of a man, took the government into his own hands, and married Isabella of Hainault, a descendant of the last of the Carolingians. This was very gratifying to the French people, for the name of Charlemagne was dearer to them than any other, and they felt that he had thus, in a manner, come back to them.

Philip began his reign with one steady purpose in his heart—that of doing all he could to bring down the pride and lessen the power of Henry Plantagenet, king of England. On the boundary line between Normandy and France there stood a magnificent elm tree, under the shade of whose spreading branches it was said that three hundred men could find shelter. This had been a favorite place of meeting for king Louis and Henry II.; and Philip, who was sometimes present at these talks, used to be secretly enraged at hearing how his simple-minded father was overreached by the cunning Henry, so he determined that when it came his turn to reign he would “pay him back.” They had

many bitter quarrels, and at last, in a fit of passion, Philip had the grand old elm cut down, so that no more talking about peace might be done under it. If he had let it alone it might have been there to this day.

From the very beginning, Philip was intensely anxious for the glory and advancement of his country. After he became king, he was once observed to be biting and gnawing at a piece of green bough he held in his hand, evidently forgetting every thing around him, and one of the courtiers ventured to ask him what he was thinking of. "I am thinking," said the king, "of a certain matter; and that is, whether God will give me, or one of my heirs, grace to raise France to the height it was at in the time of Charlemagne." It was not possible for any man in the twelfth century to make France what it had been in the time of Charlemagne; but Philip Augustus did one thing which Charlemagne had failed in; he left his kingdom so firmly bound together that it did not split apart at his death.

When Philip had been reigning seven years, the proposition for a third crusade set all Europe in a ferment once more, and he was one of the first to take the cross. In one of those short intervals when he was on friendly terms with Richard Cœur de Lion, they agreed to go to the Holy Land together; but when there, Richard's haughty bearing so disgusted Philip that he left his companion in arms to finish the crusade by himself, and came home with the greater part of his army. French historians defend his action in this matter, but it is highly probable that the hot-tempered Richard thought him a coward and a sneak, though he

did not say so. They parted civilly enough, and Philip took a solemn oath before leaving Palestine that he would respect the rights of his brother of England, and do him no mischief in his absence.

He was not the man, however, to keep an oath when anything was to be made by breaking it, and we hear of him at Rome, on the way home, asking the pope to absolve him from his vow. His first business after his return was to enter into a close friendship with Prince John of England, Richard's brother, and to encourage him to rebellion by every means in his power. We all know how it fared with Richard on his return; how he was shipwrecked, and taken captive and kept in prison in Germany; how Philip and John were plotting together against him all this time, and how, when he escaped at last, the false friend wrote to the false brother, "Take care of yourself, for the devil has broken loose." After this there could be no longer even a pretence of friendship between the two kings, but the death of Richard relieved Philip from his worst enemy, and quickly deserting the new king, John, he took up the cause of Arthur of Brittany, who was the rightful heir to the English throne.

It soon became plain that he had not supported the claim of this young man from any love of justice, but only to injure and weaken King John; for when the latter proposed that Philip's son Louis should marry Blanche of Castile, a niece of John, the French king immediately forgot all about Arthur's rights, and left him to do the best he could for himself. As if every thing played into Philip's hands, the cold-blooded murder of the young prince by his uncle John soon offer-

ed an excuse for attacking the latter again, and the remainder of John's reign was only a series of struggles against his powerful enemy. The final struggle took place at the battle of Bouvines, in Flanders, where Philip won a splendid victory which placed him at the height of power and glory.

This was the end of his fighting. He spent the rest of his life in making secure what he had gained, and in improving, in every possible way, the condition of his country and his people. We can hardly realize at this day the difference between France as he left it and France as he found it. Many institutions of learning were founded or encouraged by him, and such works as public aqueducts, markets, hospitals, and churches still remain to show how intelligently he used the money furnished him by his people.

The city of Paris, where he lived, was especially the object of his care. He found it neglected and filthy, its narrow streets choked up by rubbish, and dirty animals quite as much at home there as human beings. His uncle, the elder brother of Louis the Seventh, had been killed by his horse stumbling over one of the pigs which were then allowed to roam at liberty through the streets of the capital. Philip changed all this. As he was standing one day at his palace window, watching the flow of the river Seine, he was almost stifled by the foul odors, that came to him from the streets, and turning away in disgust, the idea occurred to him that he would have the streets paved with stone, which was partly carried out in his own time. He wished to clear Paris of its old name, Lutetia, which as I told you meant "mud-town." He

completed the grand old church of Notre Dame, which stands on an island in the Seine that once contained the whole city of Paris, and enlarged and repaired the palace of the Louvre, which still stands to attest his magnificence.

The crusades against the Mahometans were not the only ones undertaken in that ferocious age. There was a frightful persecution of the Jews by Philip's orders, and an equally terrible war against the Albigenses, a simple-minded and harmless people who lived in the district around Albi, a city of the beautiful country called Languedoc, in the south of France. Here a sect of Christians had sprung up who differed in doctrine from the Catholic Church, and who, seeing that in many things the lives of the monks were not what they ought to be, openly reproached them for their shortcomings. They were, in fact, a sort of Protestants, and Innocent III. ordered that they should be treated like infidels, giving the charge of the expedition against them to Simon de Montfort, a brave but cruel man, who had already been on a crusade and knew how such things were done.

This leader was the father of that famous Simon de Montfort who plays such an important part in the history of England in the time of Henry III. He thought that the best thing to do with heretics was to burn or hang them; so he was a man after Innocent's own heart. Armed with the Pope's authority, he collected a large army and marched against the Albigenses as if they had been Turks. No mercy was shown. When the Crusaders were about to attack a large city which contained both heretics and good Catholics, some one asked a

priest who was with Simon, what should be done about it. "Kill them all!" was the savage answer; "the Lord will know his own!" Not a living soul was spared; men, women and children were slaughtered like wild beasts, and after the city had been given up to the soldiers to plunder, it was set on fire, and soon nothing remained of it but heaps of ashes.

This was a specimen of the whole war. One would think in reading about it that the crusaders had been American Indians in disguise, so little humanity did they show. It would be too heart-rending to relate all they did; but one passage, taken from a writer who lived at that time, will give some idea of their way of making war. "After the taking of the castle of Lavaur, Amaury, Lord of Montréal, and eighty other knights were dragged out from it, the noble Count Simon commanding that they should all be hung on one gibbet. But when Amaury, the most important man among them, was hung, the gallows fell, not having been firmly fixed in the ground, owing to the great haste. The Count, seeing that this would cause much delay, ordered that the others should have their throats cut, and the pilgrims joyfully fell upon them and massacred them all on the spot. The lady of the castle, Amaury's sister, and a very wicked heretic, was, by the Count's orders, thrown into a well, which was filled up with stones. Finally our crusaders gathered together the innumerable heretics who were in the castle, and burned them alive with extreme joy."

And this was done in the name of the religion of Christ!

Philip Augustus was too wise a man not to disap-

prove of such horrid deeds, and was much displeased that the Pope should thus intrude upon his dominions and make war upon his vassals, but he did not venture to quarrel with him, especially as he needed all his strength to fight King John. So he remained passive while Simon de Montfort went on triumphantly killing, burning and destroying; the Pope all the while encouraging the Crusaders, and promising Heaven to those who fell, and a share in the land to those who conquered; and after the lovely valleys of Languedoc and Provence had been made desolate, the people silenced and their rulers killed or forced to submit, the war was declared to be at an end. "He made a solitude and called it Peace."

Another enterprise which Philip II. permitted rather than encouraged, was an invasion of England undertaken by his son, afterward Louis VIII. The English barons, disgusted by the behavior of King John, invited the young prince to take his place. Louis collected an army and landed in England, where he was warmly welcomed; but the death of King John soon afterward turned the hearts of the people towards his son Henry, a boy of nine years old, who had done them no wrong, and Louis was civilly dismissed.

Louis the Eighth reigned only three years, and is known in history chiefly as being the son of a great father, the father of an excellent son, and the husband of the most admirable woman of her time, Blanche of Castile, who was left Regent of the Kingdom at his death, his son Louis the Ninth being then only twelve years old.

The proud noblemen who had been kept down by the firm hand of Philip Augustus did not at all relish the idea of being subject to a child who was himself under the authority of a woman; but Blanche of Castile seemed to have been born on purpose to hold just the position she did. She had great good sense and a strong will, joined with elegant manners, and a certain useful quality called *tact*, which enables people to go through the world without giving offence. So, although the great lords began by forming parties against her, she managed to steer clear of difficulties, or when she met them, she overcame them so skillfully that her enemies hardly perceived that she had got the better of them.

According to the custom of the time, Queen Blanche selected a wife for her son—a beautiful girl called Marguerite, daughter of the Count of Provence. We know little about this young lady, except that Louis was very fond of her; and as he was of a most noble character himself, we take it for granted that she was endowed with all womanly virtues. The queen-mother, wise and good as she was, could not help being a little jealous of her daughter-in-law, fearing that her society would make king Louis forget his duties. One of the lords of the court called Joinville, has left us a most interesting sketch of Louis the Ninth, and tells some amusing stories about the way in which his mother continued to rule him, even after he was a man grown.

She kept such a close watch upon him and his wife that they could scarcely ever talk together, except in secret, and one of their plans to escape her vigilance

shows considerable ingenuity. They had apartments one over the other in different stories of the same palace, an inner staircase leading from one to the other, and on this stairway they would meet and have their talks together without interruption. They took the sentinels at the doors into their confidence, and when Queen Blanche was approaching to pay either of them a visit, these men had orders to knock on the floor with their staves, or make some unusual noise, to let the royal pair know who was coming. Then we can imagine them scampering away to their own rooms, where the king would perhaps be found reading his book, and the queen busy with her embroidery. It must have been very comical to all who were in the secret.

CHAPTER X.

ST. LOUIS. PHILIP THE BOLD.—1226–1285.



It is not likely that any of the brilliant company who were assembled at the wedding of Louis and the charming Marguerite, thought that the title of saint would ever be added to his name. He was nineteen years old, handsome, refined-looking and graceful; well educated according to the ideas of his time, and fond of such amusements as were then customary among gentlemen—hunting, hawking, and various kinds of games. He had a taste also for fine clothes and elegant furniture, not unbecoming to his years and station.

After his marriage, however, he seemed to lose his interest in outside amusements. He gave up, of his own accord, the pleasures he had taken so much delight in; replaced his costly clothes by a simpler dress, and found in the enjoyments of home and the cares of public business ample occupation for all the hours not occupied in devotion. From his childhood he showed a sincere and fervent piety, and his mother had brought him up in the feeling that it was better and nobler to do what was right than to acquire any earthly gain or glory. Yet he did not neglect the affairs of his kingdom. He lost no opportunity of securing advantages for his country when he could do so honestly, and by wisdom and firmness succeeded in bringing all the great vassals into obedience.

A good king, a good neighbor, a good husband and father, a good son,—what a pity that he could not have been content to go on and lead his whole life according to that excellent beginning! But the same spirit of devotion to duty which had been his ruling principle through life, made him think that he ought to go on a crusade. Horrible things were happening in Asia. It was not only the Saracens who were now opposing the Christians there, but also a new army of people, the Mongol Tartars; barbarians who amused themselves after a battle by making pyramids of the human heads they had cut off, and who caused money to be made with the word “DESTRUCTION” stamped upon it.

They meant what they said. In a battle near Gaza thirty thousand Christians had perished, and Jerusalem, then in the hands of the Mahometans, had been sack-

ed with frightful carnage. The Latin Emperor of Constantinople begged St. Louis for help, and a severe illness which happened to him just at this time decided the question at once. While hovering between life and death, he made a vow to lead an army to the Holy Land if he should recover; and though his wife and mother fell on their knees before him trying to persuade him to give it up, and all the wisest men in his kingdom advised him against it, he persisted in doing what he thought was right.

It was the great mistake of his life. Though he spent several years in making preparations, the result of his expedition was a miserable failure. He went first to Egypt, where the Saracens were very strong; and when the fleet arrived at Damietta he leaped into the water in full armor and waded ashore, so eager was he to meet the enemy. The city was taken, but though there were plenty of brave men in the army, there was no great general, and Louis failed to make the most of his success.

The crusaders advanced towards the city of Mansourah, and a part of the army having with great difficulty forced their way into it, the enemy shut the gates behind them, and they were massacred, almost to a man, in its narrow streets. The remainder fought their way forward, sometimes gaining a victory; but the thousands of corpses lying unburied under a tropical sun caused a pestilence in the army, and there was nothing to do but retreat. The dead Saracens were even more destructive to them than the living ones. The enemy pursued the Christian host nearly to Damietta, and there the king, who was very ill

from the effects of the climate, was made prisoner with his whole army.

Many of these heroic men,—for they were heroes in spite of their mistakes—were immediately put to death; others were spared on condition of their turning Mahometans, and remaining among their enemies, and the richest were kept for enormous ransoms which their captors required of them. That of king Louis was fixed at a sum equal to about two millions of dollars in gold. Louis instantly promised to pay that sum for the release of his soldiers, adding that he would give the city of Damietta for his own ransom, as the value of a king could not be counted in money. The sultan was so much pleased with this generosity that he gave up, of his own accord, one-fifth of the sum of money demanded.

The story of St. Louis's adventures in the East would fill a whole book, but we must pass them over with only a slight mention. The Queen went with him to the crusade, and when he was taken prisoner was for a while separated from him, which of course was a time of cruel anxiety to her. She told an old knight who was taking care of her, that he must take an oath to kill her if the city where she was should be taken by the Saracens, and was perhaps a little surprised when he assured her that she need not feel the slightest anxiety on that score for it was just what he had already made up his mind to do! She had a little son born under these painful circumstances who was called John, and was surnamed Tristan, or The Sad, in memory of that dreadful time.

In his truce with the Sultan, Louis had agreed not

to fight against him for ten years, but he could not bear to go back to France without having done something. He spent four years in Palestine, fortifying the towns in possession of the Christians, and helping them with money and kind actions of all sorts, and might have remained still longer but that news was brought to him of the death of Queen Blanche, who had been left as Regent in his absence. This was a great grief to him, for he loved her sincerely, and felt that he owed her a deep debt of gratitude. One of the last acts of her life had been to put down an uprising of the peasants, called Pastorals, who had committed frightful outrages in France, especially towards the clergy. They were subdued, and Louis found his country quiet and prosperous, and his people delighted to welcome him back after his six years' absence.

All who saw him, however, perceived with regret that his face bore marks of deep and settled sorrow. The old light-heartedness was gone ; a heavy weight seemed resting on his mind, and he still wore the red cross on his shoulder. Yet the fifteen years that followed his return were among the most beautiful of his life. He lived like a father among his people, dealing justice equally to all. He is described as sitting at Vincennes under an oak tree, and letting all the common people who had anything to complain of, bring their troubles directly to him. He loved the office of peace-maker, and was never weary of reconciling his barons one to another, often making up from his private purse the loss which he decided should be borne by one of the parties. He strictly forbade them to settle their disputes by battle, as had formerly been the custom, and

made such just and equal laws that even the haughty peers were willing to abide by them. All people relied on him ; the clergy for his piety, the nobles for his justice, the poor for his generosity and mercy ; and under him France became a model for the countries of the earth.

But alas! the old shadow hung over the king; he never felt that his vow had been accomplished, and in spite of all that could be said against it, he resolved upon another crusade. It was so unpopular that the prudent Joinville considered himself justified in refusing to join it, but the influence of the king was great, and many knights felt that they would rather go with him, even to defeat, than stay behind in selfish peace and security. His invitation to his nobles to accompany him on one of his crusades has a touch of humor about it. "It was the custom to give each courtier a new robe at Christmas. On Christmas Eve the king bade all his court be present at early morning mass. At the chapel door each man received his new cloak, put it on, and went in. At first all was dark; but as the day rose, each saw the cross on his neighbor's shoulder." At first they were disposed to laugh at one another, but when they remembered that having once assumed the cross they could not draw back without shame, their faces grew long, for they would much have preferred staying at home.

Contrary to the wish of the Pope, Louis took three of his sons with him on his second crusade, the youngest being only seventeen years old. His own health was so feeble at the time that the journey was little better than an act of madness. Instead of going at

once to the Holy Land, he landed at Tunis, on the coast of Africa, which was in possession of the Mahometans; but before there was time to do anything, and while the king was waiting for the arrival of his brother, a dreadful sickness, caused by the climate, broke out in the army. Poor John Tristan was one of the first to lay down his young life, and very soon the king was attacked also. He had little idea of getting well, and made his arrangements for death with the utmost calmness. He called his remaining sons to him, as well as his daughter Isabel and her husband, who had accompanied him, and gave them his last instructions and his blessing, exhorting Prince Philip, who was to succeed him, to rule justly and in the fear of God. Then he caused a bed of ashes to be made on the floor, on which he was laid in token of humility and sorrow for sin; and on this he died, murmuring "Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" almost with his last breath.

We should not get a good idea of St. Louis if we thought of him only as a king, and did not look into his family circle. We are told that "after supper his children followed him into his room, where they sat down around him; he instructed them in their duties, and then sent them away to bed. . . . When he had time he went to see them in their own apartment, inquired into the progress they were making in their studies, and gave them excellent instruction."

He delighted, as all wise men have done, in the society of men of learning; and good old Joinville tells us, "When we were at court with him in private, he would sit at the foot of his bed; and if any one proposed reading aloud to him he would say, 'You

shall not read to me, for after dinner there is nothing so pleasant as talking freely, where every one can say what he likes.' . . . I was twenty-two years in his company without ever having heard him use an oath. . . . Never did I hear him name the devil, except in reading some book where it was proper to name him. And it is a great disgrace to the kingdom of France that one can hardly speak now without saying, 'The devil take it!' In the Joinville household any one who utters such a word receives a box on the ears or a slap on the face, and bad language is thus almost entirely suppressed."

The king was most severe against blasphemy, and appears to have invented several punishments for it. Joinville "saw a goldsmith placed by his orders on a ladder, in shirt and drawers, with a pig's entrails round his neck in such quantity that they reached to his nose. And I have heard," he goes on, "that he ordered a burgher of Paris to be branded on the nose and under lip for the same offense; but I did not see that." When the king heard that complaints were made of this severity, he declared that he would be willing himself to be so branded, and to bear the shame of it all his life, if by so doing the sin of blasphemy might disappear from his dominions.

The son who succeeded St. Louis was called Philip the Bold, though it is difficult to tell why, for he seems to have been an insignificant sort of person. He might have been called Philip the Sorrowful when he came back from Tunis, for he brought with him five coffins containing the remains of his father, of John Tristan, of his brother-in-law the king of Navarre, and

of his own wife and his infant son, who had died on the way home. It must have been a dreary time; and instead of the joyful applause which usually greeted a king's return, a mournful silence reigned in the streets of Paris, as the funeral procession slowly took its way towards the cathedral of St. Denis.

The chief interest of Philip's reign lies not so much in his own doings as in those of his uncle, Charles of Anjou, whose misgovernment in Sicily was the cause of the horrible massacre known as "The Sicilian Vespers." The Pope had offered the crown of Sicily and Naples to St. Louis for one of his sons; but as that upright monarch would not take it from the rightful heir, it was next offered to his brother Charles, who accepted it without scruple. His tyranny so enraged the Sicilians that they rose against the French in the island and killed several thousands of them. Charles was driven out of Sicily, and the king of Aragon took possession of it.

The Pope, who was firmly persuaded that all the kingdoms of the earth were his to give or take away as he pleased, now offered the crown of Aragon to Philip the Third of France if he would conquer it for himself, that being the usual condition on which such things were granted. This prince, not having the sensitive conscience which had distinguished his father, eagerly consented, and led an army into Spain for the purpose. He might better have stayed at home; the terrible heat cut down his soldiers faster than the swords of their enemies could do, and he was more anxious to get back into his own country than he had been to leave it. It was hard to get provisions, or proper

attendance for the sick, who died by hundreds on the way ; the Spaniards attacked them continually as they marched, and to crown all, the King fell sick, and before the miserable remains of his army could reach the capital, he himself was numbered with the dead. His ambition had proved his ruin.

He was succeeded by his son, Philip the Fourth, called "The Fair," who was but seventeen years old at the time of his father's death.

CHAPTER XI.

PHILIP THE FAIR AND HIS SONS.—²1285—1428.



HE surname of this king must have been derived entirely from a handsome face, for, according to the ungrammatical old proverb "Handsome is that handsome does," he did not deserve it on the score of good actions. He seems to have been thoroughly selfish and cold-hearted, greedy for money and unscrupulous in his ways of getting it. He introduced the practice of debasing the coin—that is, mixing inferior metals with gold and silver,—and then refused to take this money in payment of the debts due to himself. In our day no people would bear such treatment, except, perhaps, in a despotic country like Turkey ; but in the fourteenth century it was considered the duty of subjects to endure whatever their kings chose to command.

Kings were not the only oppressors in those dark centuries. Every noble was possessed of almost absolute power over the unfortunate peasants who obtained a wretched living by tilling his land. We read of their being forced to perform unmanly and degrading antics for the amusement of the lords and their guests, and of their being kept up all night, after a hard day's work, to beat the surface of a pond near some fine lady's window, that her slumbers might not be disturbed by the croaking of the frogs! A heavy reckoning were the masters heaping up for themselves, to be paid in the fullness of time.

Philip the Fourth was certainly a man of energy and talent. His ingenuity in getting money has seldom been equalled. The parliament, or high court of justice, which under St. Louis had been the place where all men were sure of obtaining their rights, was considered by him only an instrument by which he could squeeze money out of his subjects. You must remember that in France the word parliament has never meant what it does in England—a body of men like our Congress, who meet to make laws for the people. It was more like our Supreme Court. The States-General, which in France took the place of a parliament or congress, was brought together for the first time in the reign of Philip the Fair, and was made up of three classes, the nobles, the clergy, and the common people, or, as they were afterwards called, the Third Estate.

Though the King required so much money for his own purposes, he had no mind that his people should be extravagant. The less they spent on themselves, the

more they would have for him; so he made very strict laws to regulate what they should eat, drink and wear. Nobody was to have more than one dish of meat at dinner and two at supper, and as people thought just as much good eating then as they do now, this was a great annoyance to them. They tried to get rid of it by putting several kinds of meat on the same dish, but the king soon heard of it, and made a new law forbidding it. One might have thought he was a dressmaker, to read over the laws regulating the clothing of his subjects. The quantity of trimming allowed on a dress was exactly stated, and depended on the rank of the wearer. To make a distinction between the nobles and common people, the latter were not allowed to keep a carriage or have a wax candle carried before them at night, and their wives were forbidden to wear expensive furs, gold or jewels. It must have been hard for these rich people not to spend their own money as they pleased, but "the king wills it" was enough, and they never thought of grumbling—at least, not aloud.

Long, pointed shoes were the fashion in this reign, but here, again, the king had something to say. The plain man could not have his shoes more than twelve inches long; this was called "the king's foot." A knight might extend them to eighteen inches, a baron to twenty-four, and a prince to thirty, or two feet and a half of our measure. Probably the king would have liked to have his about five feet long if it had not been for setting a good example to his subjects, which he was very anxious to do. How these good people managed to get along without tripping each other up, is

not stated, but one soon becomes accustomed to the most inconvenient fashions, as we have seen in our own day.

Philip was always trying to get what was not his own, and therefore always quarreling with somebody. His first attack was on Edward the First of England, whom he cheated out of the province of Guienne, one of the English possessions in France. Having patched up a peace with him, he next invaded the rich country of Flanders on his northeastern border, and soon declared it "annexed" to France. But the liberty-loving Flemings, after enduring for a short time the tyranny of an insolent French governor, were disposed to act over again the tragedy of the Sicilian Vespers. At the dead of night a sudden war-cry sounded in the silent city of Bruges; chains were stretched across the streets to prevent the French from running about the town, as it was said; but there was not much danger of their running, for they were pitched headlong from high windows to dash out their brains upon the stone pavements, or taken to the slaughter-houses to have their throats cut,—and before the dreadful carnival was at an end, a bloody grave was all that remained to those who had been feeding upon the fat of the land in conquered Flanders.

To punish these audacious rebels, Philip sent an army into their country under the command of some of his bravest generals. At the battle of Courtray, which followed, the Flemings showed that it was not only in midnight massacres that they could make way with their foes. The French were hopelessly beaten; their gilt spurs were picked up by the bushel, at least

so the story runs, and hung up as trophies in the great church; and instead of a courier spurring gaily towards Paris with the news of a triumph, a jaded fugitive brought Philip a scrap of bloody parchment on which some wounded knight had scrawled the tidings of defeat.

At length peace was made with Flanders, but there was another quarrel to be fought out. The Pope of that day, Boniface the Eighth, a haughty and overbearing man, had already had some disputes with Philip as to the right of the latter to tax the clergy, the King taking the ground that as this class were as much interested as any other in the good order and prosperity of the country, they ought therefore to help in supporting the government. This the Pope would not listen to, and sent out one bull after another against him, each more abusive than the last. As the King was not in the least affected by these bulls, and held fast to his own purpose, Pope Boniface excommunicated him and threatened to lay his kingdom under an interdict, which, in those times, was a great calamity for the people. By "Interdiction" all offices of the clergy were forbidden, except the baptism of new-born infants; there could be no service in the churches, no burial of the dead with religious rites, no marriages; the King was declared deposed, and whoever should kill him was assured of the Pope's forgiveness.

This state of things could not last forever, and some of Philip's friends in Italy who had their own private reasons for hating the Pope, forced their way into his palace at Anagni, and took him prisoner. It is even said that one of them brutally struck the white-haired

old man in the face with his iron gauntlet, so that the blood streamed down. Boniface was rescued after a few days by his friends, and taken to Rome, but he had received his death blow. He lost his reason, and after some weeks of suffering, during which he imagined himself starving; he was found dead in his bed.

After a short interval, Philip persuaded the Cardinals to choose a Pope of his own nomination,—a Frenchman who took the name of Clement the Fifth. He was the King's very obedient servant, and agreed beforehand to the most degrading conditions, as the price to be paid for his elevation. He established himself at Avignon, in France, instead of at Rome, and for seventy years his successors, Frenchmen like himself, followed his example. When any thing too shameful was required of him by Philip, he would try to get off by pretending to be sick, but he never succeeded in shaking himself free of the king, who held on like a leech. Philip's principal use for him was to make him force money out of the people, and poor Clement traveled from place to place, exacting tithes for this, and tithes for that, until everybody hated the sight of him. He extorted money from the Jews until it was plain that they could yield no more, but this was not enough. The cry of Philip was still for "gold! gold!" and when all other sources had been drained dry, he revealed to the Pope a scheme he had long been revolving in his mind; it was the destruction of the Knights Templars.

To understand what this means, you must go back to the time of the First Crusade. After Jerusalem had been taken by the Christians in 1099, most of the

crusading army returned to Europe, leaving those who stayed in Palestine in a rather unprotected position. For the defence and relief of these, two great societies were established; one called the Knights of St. John, who took care of the sick and of strangers, and the other called the Knights of the Temple, who bound themselves to erect a temple at Jerusalem and maintain it against the infidels. They were both monks and knights; that is, they were not allowed to marry, and were obliged to give up the riches and pleasures of life and promise obedience to their superiors; but it was also their duty to fight for their cause, which monks could not do.

In spite of their vow of poverty, these Knights of the Temple became, in the course of time, immensely rich, and when it was no longer the fashion to go on crusades, they grew luxurious and idle, as people are apt to do who have no steady occupation, and led very different lives from the pure ones they set out to lead. Many dreadful stories were told about them, which grew worse as they passed from mouth to mouth; and as they had done nothing to make the people of their own time love them, there was no one to speak a word in their favor when Philip resolved on their ruin.

He began by inviting the Grand Master of the Templars, Jacques de Molay, to come to France on business, pretending that he wanted to consult him about the plan of a new crusade, all the while meaning, probably, to put him to a cruel death when the right time should come. Suddenly, by a well-arranged plan, every Templar in France was arrested and thrown into prison on the same day, and Philip at

once took possession of the Temple and its hoards of wealth.

So far all had succeeded, but it was still necessary to go through some form which should excuse such an action to the world, and a regular system of torture was applied to the unfortunate prisoners, under the agonies of which some of the poor wretches confessed impossible crimes, too loathsome to be repeated, and which they denied afterward when relieved from the torture. It made no difference what they confessed or denied; judgment was pronounced against them, and on one day fifty-four of them were burnt at the stake. After years of persecution, the Pope finally ordered that the whole society of the Templars should be abolished and their possessions distributed in various ways, the King of France of course getting a large share.

The Grand Master and two of the higher officers of the Order were still captives, and having under horrible tortures confessed what was charged against them, they were condemned to perpetual imprisonment. When the sentence was read to them their courage came back; they denied everything, and said it was only their cruel sufferings that had made them say what was not true; and without waiting for another trial, Philip had them privately burned at night. There was a tradition, long believed in France, that when the Grand Master was tied to the stake and the flames were making their way over his body and playing about his gray hair, he summoned the Pope and the King to meet him before the judgment seat of God, the one within forty days and the other within a year; but this was probably a prophecy made after the event,

and suggested by the fact that both Pope and King died within the periods stated.

Philip the Fair left three sons, Louis X., the Quarreler, Philip V., the Long, and Charles IV., the Fair, all of whom became, in succession, kings of France; his daughter, Isabella, married Edward II. of England. By a singular fatality none of his sons left any male children; and as an old law in France, called the *Salique law*, forbade a woman to ascend the throne, the crown which had descended from father to son ever since the time of Hugh Capet, passed to Philip of Valois, a nephew of Philip the Fair.


Little is known of the state of France during the reigns of the three Brother-Kings, except that there was great distress among the people. The barons were occupied in regaining the power which had been taken from them under the severe reign of Philip the Fourth, and the common people, trampled on by all, had no St. Louis to protect them. The miserable people called Lepers were accused of poisoning the wells,—a thing they could have had no possible object in doing,—and were burned alive by hundreds. Then the popular fury broke out against the Jews, who were said to have conspired with the lepers, and they were often condemned without even the mockery of a trial. At one place a pit was dug in the ground, a great fire was lighted in the bottom of it, and a hundred and sixty Jews, men and women together, were pitched in alive and burned to death. Some of them were so much excited by the horrible festival that they jumped in of their own accord, “singing like wedding-guests,” the chronicler says. These were the poor; the richer

ones were kept in prison until the King could get possession of their property, after which they were in many cases banished from the kingdom.

But it is time to turn from these sickening scenes to the royal but unlucky family of Valois.

CHAPTER XII.

PHILIP OF VALOIS. JOHN THE GOOD—1328—1364.

HILIP the Sixth was a King that suited the great nobles exactly. In the reign of Philip the Fair they had been kept in subjection, and during the short lives of his sons they had been gradually getting their own way more and more, but here was some one who began his reign in a truly kingly fashion, according to their notion. Nothing was heard of but feasting, tournaments, shows and revels of all kinds. Plenty of money, plenty of fine clothes, new furniture and equipments, crowds of servants and officers, lavish hospitality—all these things made the court of France the most attractive place in Europe.

It was not his own nobles alone that King Philip invited to these entertainments. We are told that several Kings preferred Paris to their own dull capitals, and stayed there altogether, each with a brilliant company of knights and ladies who were all kept sumptuously at Philip's expense. Or was it at his expense?

The toiling peasants of France and the industrious middle class could have told a different story. One proof of the King's boundless generosity to his nobles is that he excused them from paying the debts due by them to these people!

Early in this reign began the great struggle between England and France which is known as the Hundred Years' War. Edward the Third of England, who was son of Philip's cousin Isabella, daughter of Philip the Fair, pretended that this relationship gave him a claim to the crown of France. He was too clear-headed a man not to know that his claim was utterly groundless, for there was a grandson of Louis the Tenth who had a much better right; but a small excuse serves in such cases, and Edward dispatched a fleet of ships to Flanders, on the northeastern coast of France, where a battle was fought near Sluys, which almost destroyed Philip's navy.

This defeat was so entirely unexpected that no one dared to tell Philip of it until the court fool contrived to bring it in by way of a joke. "What cowards those English are!" he exclaimed. "Why so?" inquired the King. "Because they didn't dare to jump into the sea as our brave fellows have done!" One sees by this that the wit of a court-jester was not required to be of a very high order.

There was some rather unsatisfactory skirmishing on land after this, but nothing of importance was done until a war in Brittany between two rival counts gave Edward a chance to strike another blow. He and Philip took opposite sides as a matter of course, the latter defending the party of the Count of Blois, and

Edward helping the heroic Countess of Montfort, whose husband was a prisoner in Philip's hands.

This countess had, as old Froissart tells us, "the courage of a man and the heart of a lion." Being driven from place to place by the King's troops, she finally took refuge in Hennebon, a town on the coast, and there defended herself bravely with such an army as she had been able to get together. She wrote to Edward that she would hold out until help came from him, and she kept her word, in spite of great discontent among her own soldiers, who thought she was throwing away their lives in the long siege. At last the welcome relief came; a fleet of English vessels commanded by the brave Sir Walter Manny, who had already done good service at Sluys, sailed into the harbor, and the besiegers moved off. Froissart says: "He who then saw the Countess come down from the castle in great gladness and kiss Sir Walter and the lords that were with him, one after another, two or three times, may well say she was a noble and valiant dame."

The year 1346 saw the first of those great English victories in France which the national pride loves so dearly to dwell on—the battle of Crécy. You have read in English history how the Black Prince, then only sixteen years old, sent to his father for help, being hard pressed; how the King asked if he was wounded or struck down, and being told that he was not, answered, "Let the boy win his spurs!" and refused to help him at all; how the old blind King of Bohemia, whose son had prudently run away from the battle, begged two knights to lead his horse forward into the enemy's

ranks where he could give one spear-thrust; how they tied their horses to his, one on each side, rushed forward into the battle, and were found all three dead together; how the Black Prince adopted the motto "Ich dien" (I serve), of the blind King, and the three ostrich feathers that his armor was marked with, as his own—all this you know by heart.

All day long the battle lasted. The French knights fought fiercely, but the English archers made dreadful havoc with their horses, and when a warrior was unhorsed, his heavy armor would not let him rise again; then Edward's Welsh soldiers rushed upon the French with their long knives, which they drove through the joints of the armor, slaughtering them like cattle. Philip, whose best quality seems to have been personal courage, could not be persuaded to quit the field. At last one of his knights seized the bridle of his horse and led him away without asking leave. Only five knights of the vast host that had started out that morning flushed with pride and hope, remained with the King in his dismal flight. The rest were scattered hither and thither, flying for their lives, and telling the sad tale as they passed along, seeking only a place where they could fling themselves down in safety. The heavy-hearted Philip rode through the darkness to the nearest castle, where he found the drawbridge up and the gates shut for the night. "Who knocks at such an hour?" shouted the warden in answer to the King's summons. "Open, Castellán," answered Philip; "it is the fortune of France." The English found on counting the dead that they had killed two kings, eleven princes, twelve hundred knights, and

thirty thousand common soldiers, a number almost equal to the whole force of the English.

It has been said that cannon were first used at the battle of Crécy, but if so, they did little good or harm, being about as much like the destructive engines which mow down thousands in a modern battle as a wheelbarrow is like a locomotive. They were exceedingly clumsy and difficult to handle, and so slightly made that they often burst in firing, killing those who stood by them instead of the enemy. Even when they went off successfully, the round stones which served instead of metal balls were buried in the earth or rolled harmlessly away in the wrong direction. They did more good in sieges, where they began to be used about the same time.

It seems as if the reign of Philip of Valois consisted mostly in the doings of Edward the Third, for no sooner have we done with Edward at Crécy than we must follow him to Calais, which he besieged for nearly a year. Its fortifications were so strong that he did not try to take them by storm, but preferred to starve out the garrison, his ships in the meantime preventing any food from reaching them by sea. Philip came in sight of them with his army more than once, causing wild joy among the famishing citizens, who hoped that their King would force his way through the English army and bring them relief. But no; Philip thought the English looked too strong for him, and, without striking a blow, abandoned the city to its fate.

At last the hour came when every rat and dead dog had been eaten, when hardly even the bones of a horse were left, and when every old boot and shoe had long

since been chewed up for food; and the brave people of Calais were forced to surrender. The story of the six men who gave themselves up as hostages for the rest, coming with halters round their necks before the indignant King, and being saved from death only by the intercession of Queen Philippa, belongs properly to English history. It will always be a pleasant thing to think of; a bright spot in the midst of a dark and dreary picture.

While Philip the Sixth was wasting his time in getting together armies which he did not use, his subjects were groaning under taxes that made them regret even the days of Philip the Fair. The one on salt, which afterwards came to be distinguished from all others by being called the Gabelle, was cruelly hard on the poor; but even this would have been borne without open murmurs if it had not been for one of the most shameful impositions a King can practise—the debasing of the coin. Philip did this until his people nearly went mad with distress, the value of money changing so continually that no one could ever be certain of its value. It all seemed to be a matter of chance. As a natural consequence business came almost to a standstill, and, as is said, grass grew in the streets of Paris. In the country it was still worse; wherever the English army had passed, the land looked as if it had been eaten off by grasshoppers. The Italian poet Petrarch, who visited France about this time, has left a moving picture of the desolation that met his eye everywhere.

The year after the taking of Calais a terrible pestilence called the Black Death broke out in many parts of Europe and spread through France;—poor France,

already dragged down to almost the lowest depth of misery, her fair fields trampled over by the English, her King a heartless tyrant, many of her best and bravest sons already sacrificed on the battle-field,—in the midst of all this came the plague, which had at least one good effect; it put a stop to war while it lasted. But alas! the old outcry was raised; it was owing to the Jews, who had poisoned the waters! And without more inquiry, thousands of these poor wretches, who seem to be the first mark aimed at in every season of distress, were cast into the flames.

Some people took a way of their own of putting a stop to the pestilence, which, they had no doubt, was God's judgment on a guilty nation. They thought they might please him by tormenting themselves, and great numbers of them wandered about the country half-naked, armed with whips of which the lashes were tipped with steel, and scourging their bare shoulders till the blood ran down in streams. These were called *Flagellants*, and were after a while put down by the strong hand, the Pope disapproving of their excesses. But all this did not stop the pestilence, which included high as well as low among its victims.

When the disease had somewhat spent its strength and people were beginning to think about the business of life again, Philip, whose wife had died of the plague, married a second time, of course burdening his people with new taxes to pay for the wedding festivities; but almost before these were well over, he died. It would be pleasant if we could imagine him with his last breath advising his son to make himself beloved by his subjects, to lighten their taxes, to rule with justice and

mercy ; but the only instructions recorded are those urging him to make good his claim to the throne against all opposition.

The title of "John the Good" by which this son was called was a singularly inappropriate one, unless we remember that it meant nothing more than what is expressed by the term "a good fellow"—which in this case meant a thoughtless, extravagant person, popular with gay companions, ready to spend other people's money, and sure never to let their rights stand for a moment in the way of his own selfish pleasure. His first idea on finding himself a king was to make a journey through his country and set everything straight. He knew that things were going very badly, but wasn't he a king, and wouldn't the very sight of him be good for the straining eyes, blinded with tears and looking anxiously for some sign of better things to come? So he went about holding tournaments (which the people had to pay for), and created a new order of knighthood—the Order of the Star—in imitation of Edward the Third's famous Order of the Garter.

But this did not put bread into his people's mouths, or help them to pay their taxes, though it made the king very happy. He had read too many foolish romances in his youth, and his head was full of nonsense ; so as long as he could have his Feasts of the Peacock, and be surrounded by a gay crowd of ladies and gentlemen who flattered and admired him, he felt that he was fully as great a man as Charlemagne.

All this time, Edward of England and his son, the Black Prince, were roaming about in France, doing all the harm they could, taking towns everywhere, and

making themselves masters of large districts of country. King John began to be very tired of this kind of work, and thought it was high time to give the English a lesson. He marched southward until he met the Black Prince near Poitiers, (the old battle-field of Clovis and Charles Martel), with a very little army, scarcely one-tenth the size of his own. But the Prince had chosen his ground just where it would place the enemy at the greatest disadvantage for attacking him; the French fell into confusion, and before the end of the day they were flying in all directions.

John's three older sons, with eight hundred knights who had not drawn sword that day, ran away like the rest,—by the king's order, it was said, but probably if they had been very brave they would have disobeyed their father just for once,—while the fourteen-year-old Philip, his youngest son, stayed with his father to the end, crying out, "Father, look to the left! Father, look to the right!" while the enemies were pressing him on every side. At last both were taken captive and sent to England, where they were very kindly treated.

It is at this time that the name Dauphin first appears in French history. In the last year of Philip the Sixth's reign, the prince of Dauphiny, a country bordering on Burgundy, grew so tired of life that he wanted to turn monk and forget all about the world and its troubles. Having no son, he offered his country to Philip's grandson on condition that it should never be annexed to France, but should remain independent. Philip accepted the gift, and to fulfill the letter of the agreement, it was arranged that as soon

as a prince became King of France he should cease to be Dauphin, some other person taking that title. If Dauphiny could never belong to the King of France, it could always belong to his eldest son.

The Dauphin Charles, who took matters into his own hands after the battle of Poitiers, was a youth of nineteen, insignificant in appearance and weak in health. He assembled the States General, and they, beginning slowly to take in the idea that the people had rights, firmly refused to grant the money demanded for the king's ransom until certain abuses were remedied. No more tampering with the coin, said they ; no more seizing of private property for the royal service without paying for it; no more taking of the public money by the Dauphin for his own use. Charles agreed to every thing; it was all quite reasonable, he said; so he sent a courier with a copy of the agreement for his father to sign. But at the same time he dispatched a private letter telling the king to refuse, which John did accordingly. When the people at home understood the game that had been played, they rose against the Dauphin and made him again promise all that they demanded, going so far as to murder two of his counsellors before his face. "Save me, save me !" he cried out to the leader of the insurgents when this horrid deed was done, and if this man had not instantly taken his own red cap, the sign of revolution, off his head and clapped it on the Dauphin's, Charles might never have lived to be called the Wise.

While these things were going on in Paris, the condition of the peasants became so intolerable that they broke out into a fearful insurrection called the Jacquerie.

Their only idea was that the rich had injured them, and it was on the rich they must be revenged. They seized lords and ladies and their children wherever they could find them, murdered them brutally or tortured them to let them know how it felt, set fire to their castles, and fairly reveled in blood and pillage.

To understand their feelings, one needs only to read a little of the history of those times. In the language of a French writer, "there was but one victim on whom the ills of war fell, and that was the peasant. Before the war he had been exhausted to pay for all those fine arms and those rich banners that had let themselves be taken at Crécy and Poitiers. And after the war, who paid the ransom? The peasant again. The noble prisoners, released on parole, returned to their lands to scrape together, in haste, the monstrous sums they had promised without higgling on the field of battle. The peasant's property took no long time to count; lean cattle, rotting harness, a plough, a cart and a few old farming implements. He had no furniture, nor anything laid by except a little seed. This being seized and sold, what remained to be taken? His body; the poor fellow's skin. Something perhaps might still be got out of him; perhaps he had some hiding-place where he kept his money, so they scorched his feet. Neither fire nor iron was spared."

Who can wonder at his cruelty when his enemies were helpless before him in their turn? It was not so much the hope of gain as a wild desire for revenge that took possession of these poor wretches. It was a satisfaction to think that they could "take it out" of the nobles in some way. But their triumph did not

last long. When the enraged nobility waked up from the shock enough to know what was going on, they banded together and hunted down the peasants like wild beasts; and after a few weeks a death-like silence reigned again in the homes of the poor.

About this time news came that the king of France, weary of English hospitality, had signed a disgraceful treaty by which he agreed to give up half his kingdom to Edward; but the dauphin, who had more spirit than his father, and, besides, was not in prison, refused to be bound by this agreement, and King John had to go back again. At length such terms were proposed as both sides could agree to, and he was finally released, leaving his second son as a hostage. "The king of England was a hard nut to crack," says plain old Froisart.

All the time of King John's stay in England there had been a wax taper burning in Paris as a sort of perpetual prayer for his safety. It was said to be six miles long, and was kept on a roller and unwound as fast as it burnt out. The King and his sons had a merry meeting at Calais, where he "received them sweetly and handsomely, for well he knew how." It was a pity that he didn't know anything else but how to behave with the outward appearance of a gentleman. At first he and his son made some reforms, and seemed as if they meant to try to govern better; but the king soon fell into his old way of going about the country feasting and holding tournaments, thinking that if he only spent money enough it would all come right somehow or other. In the mean time the money was not collected for his ransom; and when he heard that his son Louis,

whom he had left on parole, had broken his word and escaped, he went back himself, saying that "good faith, if it were banished from the rest of the world, ought to be found in the heart of kings." So he returned to England, where he was received with bonfires and bell-ringing, lodged in a splendid palace, and supplied with the means of enjoying himself in his favorite way. He lived only a few months after his return, and his royal jailer gave him a splendid funeral at St. Paul's.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHARLES THE WISE.—1364—1380.



NOBODY expected much from the dauphin. His long, pale face and thin figure were not very promising, and his health, never good, was almost ruined by a dose of poison administered by his dear cousin, Charles the Bad, in revenge for his own imprisonment. But though he spent most of his time sitting at a study-table, he knew how to direct the movements of armies, and, still better, how to select able men to command them. Edward the Third said of him, that he was the one of all his enemies whom he never saw, and yet who gave him the most trouble.

Charles soon found enough to do. There was a war raging in Spain between Pedro the Cruel and his brother Henry, and the latter having asked Charles for help, our wise king thought it would be a good thing to occupy the idle soldiers called "Free Lances" in

something besides plundering their own countrymen. These men had served in both the English and French armies, and, having been disbanded, formed themselves into "Free Companies," which meant free to do as they pleased and live on other people's earnings. They besieged towns, castles and churches, obliging their defenders to pay a heavy ransom to get rid of these unwelcome visitors, and quartered themselves upon the farmers without ceremony. Charles's great general, Du Guesclin, undertook to get an army from among these troublesome spirits, and fight Prince Henry's battles for him. Pedro the Cruel naturally looked to Edward the Black Prince as his friend because they were both enemies of the French, and being driven out of Spain, took refuge at Bordeaux, where Edward had a regular court and was a king in his way, just as much as Charles was at Paris.

As the years went on, the Black Prince gradually lost ground in France. His health failed, the people whom he had conquered rebelled against the enormous taxes levied on them to support his war with Spain, and at last he went home to die.

Du Guesclin in the meantime had been going on steadily in the work of re-conquering France. The last place he besieged was very stubborn in its resistance, and kept him a long time waiting at its gates. At last the governor promised that he would surrender if help did not come from England before a certain day. The day came, the promised relief did not; but news was brought to the governor that Du Guesclin had died of a fever. True to his word, the commander of the fortress, having sworn to surrender to none

but the Constable, hauled down his flag, and marching out at the head of his men, laid the keys of the castle in silence on the dead man's breast.

For some time after his death there was no one willing to take the office of Constable, but at last the king bestowed it on Oliver De Clisson, who received the nickname of "The Butcher." On one occasion, when a garrison had irritated him by an unusually long resistance, and were at last compelled by starvation to surrender, he stood at the gate as the famishing wretches tottered out, worn to the bone by hunger and misery, and dashed out the brains of each in succession with a heavy battle-axe. When he had disposed of fifteen of them in this way, he threw down the axe with a sigh of relief, and left the rest for some one else to finish off. We must admit that he justified his name.

Charles the Wise lived only two months after the death of the brave Du Guesclin. The people of France, who despised him at first for his weakness, had found out how much better it was to have a wise king who could sit at home and let his generals do the fighting, than a foolish one who led his armies to defeat by his rashness. Here was a king who had neither debased the coin nor increased the taxes; who had driven the English almost entirely out of his country, and had added several provinces to it by his wisdom; who paid his soldiers their wages regularly, and kept up a wise economy in his own expenses. No more feasting now at the palace, no more tournaments; and yet, when the occasion called for it, Charles could entertain foreign ambassadors at his court with a splendor greater

than had ever been seen before. As there were no grasping favorites to be pensioned out of the people's money, the king grew rich and the people felt none the poorer.

It was said of Edward the Third of England, that his victories made his people "very proud and very poor." It might have been said of Philip of Valois and his son John that their wars left their people very poor and not very proud; but regarding Charles the Fifth we can truly say that while they had reason to be proud, they did not at the same time feel that their pride had been fed at the expense of their prosperity.

Though the people of France had been growing more refined ever since the time of Charlemagne, there was still room for improvement, as you will think when you read some of the directions given by a nobleman to his daughters for the regulation of their conduct. They must not laugh loudly at the table, nor get their fingers daubed with their food; they must keep themselves clean and their nails cut short, and when they walk in the streets they are not to stop and look in at the windows of dwelling houses. Lastly, he recommends them to refrain from stealing and telling lies, which we hope they did after reading his fatherly advice.

As we have often spoken of tournaments, some words of explanation in regard to chivalry, the institution in which they originated, will not be out of place. Chivalry began in very dark times when might made right and the weak were oppressed by the strong, and was at first only an association of the best and bravest men to correct this cruel state of things. It was a beauti-

ful idea, and when fully carried out, must have come as near to the standard of perfect manhood as is possible in this world.

At seven years old, the boy designed for knighthood must leave his home and be sent to the castle of some knight renowned for bravery, which was not hard to find, for in those days all knights were called brave and all ladies fair. Here he passed the years from seven to fourteen, during which time he was called a page, and pursued the studies which would fit him to do honor to the knightly profession. Not reading, writing and arithmetic—oh, no! Many great men had to make a prick in the paper with sword or dagger if it were necessary to sign a deed, and reading was thought fit only for monks. But the page must learn to take care of horses and armor, manage his lady's falcon, follow the dogs to the chase, and practice the two great virtues of truthfulness and obedience.

At fourteen the page becomes a squire. His ardor has long been fired at the recital of noble deeds, of which he has heard during the winter evenings when the family are gathered in the great hall, at one end of which is a blazing fire, showing the suits of armor and trophies of the chase, which hang upon the wall. Often the wandering troubadour or minstrel claims a place by the fireside, and when he has been warmed and fed, sings a song of warlike deeds which makes the young squire burn with impatience to enter on his career. The boy's education now becomes stricter. He must begin the labors and the self-denial which are to fit him to play his part in the world. When he is old enough he follows his lord to battle, and is bitterly

disappointed if no opportunity occurs of distinguishing himself, and earning the gilded spurs which are to replace his iron ones. At the age of twenty-one he is admitted into the full companionship of knighthood, unless it has been his good fortune to earn the privilege sooner.

As knights could not be fighting all the time, and from their restless, warlike life were apt to find the intervals of peace rather dull, they had mock fights, called tournaments. A great space was railed in, called the lists; outside of this were raised galleries crowded with spectators, numbers of splendidly dressed ladies adding brilliancy to the scene. At the sound of the trumpets, the knights, on horseback, started from opposite ends of the lists, and rode at full speed towards one another, each trying to unseat his opponent by striking him with the end of his lance, which had been blunted for the occasion. Sometimes this riding back and forth would go on for hours, no one doing damage enough to bring the sport to an end—the ladies meanwhile cheering their favorites and sending them scarfs, ribbons and gloves, which the knights fastened on over their armor, feeling very proud of the compliment. Finally, the one who was decided to have done the best came and knelt down at the feet of the most beautiful lady, to receive the prize awarded to the victor, amidst shouting and rejoicing from the vast crowd, and congratulations of friends. This sport was too exciting not to be very agreeable to such restless mortals as the warriors of the middle ages, and tournaments continued in fashion long after the invention of gunpowder had closed the era of knighthood.

And now we must pass on to the sad story of the son and successor of Charles the Wise. Poor little Charles the Sixth ! Left an orphan at twelve years old, handsome, light-hearted and rather empty-headed, the responsibilities of his kingdom weighed but little upon him, while his uncles encouraged him in all kinds of foolish amusements that would take his mind off from public affairs, and leave everything in their hands.

There was not one of them who had anything like an unselfish desire for the good of the country, or the welfare of the king. What each one wanted was to get the largest share of riches and power for himself, and, being responsible to no one, their avarice brought untold miseries upon the people of France.

The oppression became so intolerable that in several places the populace rose against these hard masters, and demanded a removal of the outrageous taxes which were making the royal dukes rich at their expense. The dukes promised everything that was asked; and then, as soon as the rioters had been pacified by fair words, all engagements with them were broken, and the most terrible vengeance taken for the rebellion. Public executions followed each other until the spectators began to protest against any more repetitions of the wretched spectacle, after which the victims were sewed up in sacks, and thrown by night into the Seine.

At this time the people of Flanders, headed by a patriot named Van Artevelde, were in rebellion against their count, and the King's uncle, the Duke of Burgundy, taking up the quarrel, used the army of France

to march against them. He took the young king with him, and, after a terrible battle at Rosbecque, in which the Flemings were defeated and Van Artevelde killed, Charles was taken to the battle-field to gaze upon the hideous spectacle of a mass of dead and dying men, and told that it was he who had won the victory. This may have been the first of those fearful impressions upon his mind which colored his whole life and afterwards deepened into madness. Indeed, he gave a proof before long of the unsettling effect of excitement on a young and unbalanced mind. In going through the town of Courtrai, where the French had been beaten in the time of Philip the Fair, somebody unluckily reminded him of the gilt spurs picked up after the battle and hung in the great church. This boy of fourteen instantly ordered that the town should be sacked and burned.

If you can picture to yourself what these words mean—if you can imagine a brutal mob of soldiers rushing through the streets of a city howling like demons, setting fire to the houses, dashing out the brains of little children, treating women with every kind of outrage, stealing everything that can be carried off and destroying the rest, and only leaving the town when it is a heap of smoking ruins, from which trembling wretches are flying in every direction—then you will have an idea of what Charles the Sixth commanded should be the fate of this large city, on account of some trophies of a battle fought nearly a hundred years before.

When the royal party returned to Paris, flushed with victory, the old work of punishment went on

again. There was more cutting off of heads and sewing up in sacks; some of the most distinguished men in the kingdom, who had tried their best to restrain the people, were sacrificed; the taxes were laid on more heavily than ever, and the people were obliged to pay an enormous fine to the king as the price of being let alone.

To show his utter contempt for the city, Charles had the gates, which had at one time been shut against him, taken off their hinges and laid flat in the streets so that the whole procession should pass over them, this being understood as a symbol of the king's trampling upon the pride of the Parisians. He also formally took away their privilege of stretching chains across the streets to keep out unwelcome visitors, which they had always looked upon as one of their few "rights." A wild plan for invading England, with preparations so enormous that they are only equalled in modern history by the Spanish Armada, resulted in a failure so ridiculous to all but the wretched people who had to bear the expense of it (and who were, of course, the poor), that but for this sad feature we might laugh at it as a very ill-played comedy. This, and the young king's ill-fated marriage to Isabella of Bavaria, are the principal events in that dark history until Charles, being twenty-one years old, took the government into his own hands, and tried, by surrounding himself with the wisest counsellors he could find, to fulfill in some sort the duties of a king.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHARLES THE WELL-BELOVED.—1380-1422.



SCARCELY in human history has a darker page been turned than that which records the woes of unhappy France during the fifty years that followed the death of Charles the Wise. A French writer, who lived two hundred years later, calls the reign of Charles the Sixth "the grave of good law and good morals." The great had grown so wicked as to be without shame, and the low had no restraint but fear. Robbery was the order of the day; from the noble with his cruel taxes to the highwayman who made pillage a trade, there was no other law than the law of the strongest. Poor Charles, with his kindly, pleasure-loving nature and wretched education, was not the man to bring order out of this chaos, though he made some praiseworthy efforts.

The brave De Clisson having been brutally attacked in the street and left for dead, by a cowardly enemy who did not dare to meet him openly, the king set out to pursue the would-be murderer into Brittany, where he had taken refuge. On the way Charles was detained for some time by illness, and when still too weak to travel, persisted in renewing his journey.

It was a sultry day in August. His way lay through what was called a forest, but its scant foliage gave him little protection from the scorching sun. From some strange whim he wore a heavy black velvet jacket, and a thick scarlet cap on his head. In order not to incom-

mode him with the dust, his uncles and the other lords rode at some little distance, no one being near him but two pages. Suddenly a tall, wild-looking man, with nothing on but a white shirt, sprang out upon him and seized his bridle, shouting, "Go no farther, King! you are betrayed!" The men-at-arms hurried forward, and striking the man's hands with the butts of their lances, made him let go the bridle. As he seemed only a poor maniac, they did not drive him away, but let him follow the king for nearly half an hour, repeating the same wild cry.

After passing through the forest they came to a sandy plain, where the rays of the sun beat down directly upon their heads. One of the pages who was riding with the king became drowsy from the dreadful heat, and being nearly asleep, let his lance fall against the steel helmet borne by his companion. The crash startled the king, who seemed to think that the madman's warning had been fulfilled, and began to strike furiously about him, wounding, and, as some reports say, killing several men before they could get out of his way. He rode about like a madman, striking blindly at whatever he saw; and it was not until his fury had somewhat spent itself and his strength began to fail, that one of his officers ventured to go up behind him and throw his arms around his body. He was lifted from his horse and laid gently on the ground; his eyes rolled about wildly, and he recognized no one. "We must go back," said his uncles; "here is an end of the trip to Brittany." On their way they met an ox-cart with some hay in it; they bound the king's arms, fearing that the frenzy might come on again,

then laid him in the cart, and the procession took its way to the town of Le Mans.

I think there are few sadder pictures in history than that of this young man of twenty-four, whom his father had left a happy, healthy boy only twelve years before, stricken down in the bloom of his youth with a madness for which there was to be no cure, surrounded by false friends, and without one true heart to turn to in his distress. The prudent and conscientious men with whom he had surrounded himself were instantly banished or put in prison, and the populace flocked daily to the *Place de Grève* (place of public executions), hoping to see them hanged. De Clisson was forced to pay an immense fine, under pretence of his having been dishonest in office, and was deprived of his office of constable, and sent into Brittany.

After a time the king recovered from this attack of insanity, but his mind was more feeble than before, and he could do little more than submit to whatever his uncles chose to do. The year after the dreadful journey the king felt enough better to desire to take part once more in one of the entertainments he had once been so fond of. One of the courtiers thought he would get up something more wild and extravagant than usual, and invented a kind of masked ball, at which the king and five of his knights were to disguise themselves as satyrs. They were dressed in tight-fitting suits of coarse linen, which were first smeared with pitch and then covered all over with tow, to look like hair. The ball-room was lighted by pine torches, held up by the attendants, which threw a fiery glare over the scene.

The Duke of Orleans, the king's brother, seized one of these torches and held it close to the face of a satyr, to try whether he could recognize him. Whether he was excited by wine and touched the torch to the tow out of mischief, or whether what followed was the result of an accident, was never known. The tow and pitch instantly caught fire, and the flame spread from one to the other until all, except Charles, who happened to be at a little distance, were in a blaze. "Save the king!" shouted one of the poor wretches in the midst of his torment; but no one knew which was the king. His aunt, the Duchess of Berri, recognized him, however, and throwing her mantle over him, hurried him out of the room.

It was a horrible sight to see these "living flames" run howling about the dancing-hall; the fire eating into their flesh, and their friends vainly trying to tear off the linen clothes which had been sewed tightly round their bodies. One saved himself by jumping into a tub of water which stood near; the others lingered for three days in dreadful suffering, and then died. The inventor of the sport was among those who were burned, to the great delight of the poor people, to whom he had been very cruel. For his own amusement and that of others, he had been accustomed to beat them like dogs until they barked, and to prick them with his spurs to make them cry out. When his body was carried through the streets at his funeral, some of them shouted out his own words: "Bark, dog, bark!"

This fearful shock brought on a return of the king's disease. He became frantic, recognized no one, and

had an especial horror of Queen Isabella, whom he declared he never had known. The only person who had any influence over him was his sister-in-law, Valentina, Dutchess of Orleans. She, neglected by her husband, who spent his time with Queen Isabella in court gayeties, felt the more sympathy for the king, because she herself was unhappy, and she was very kind to him. He called her "My sweet sister," and was always satisfied when she was with him.

And so fell that dark shadow which for thirty years rested on the hapless king. For awhile some efforts were made to cure him, and when these failed he was neglected and almost forgotten. For months together, it is said, his clothes were not changed, and he roamed about the vacant corridors of the Hotel St. Pol, a melancholy shadow of greatness. The infamous queen cared no more for her children than for her husband; and once when, during a short interval of reason, the governess of the young princes and princesses came to the king and told him that they were in want of the necessaries of life, he burst into tears, and exclaimed, "Ah! I can easily believe it, for Isabel treats myself no better." He then gave her the gold drinking-cup which he had just been using, that she might sell it and supply their wants.

The people of Paris were always fond of their king, even in his dark days, and to please them he was taken out to church, or to some public show whenever he was well enough. When he was not violent he was very gentle and patient; but the days passed slowly, and some kind-hearted person brought him some playing cards, which had been known before, but were

very little used. Charles liked them, and they helped to pass away many a tedious hour.

The remainder of Charles's unhappy reign is only one dreary succession of quarrels between two great rivals who were struggling to gain the supreme power—the dukes of Burgundy and Orleans. When the old Duke of Burgundy died, his son, John Sans Peur, (without fear), took up the quarrel just where his father had left it, and a French writer says of him, "Nature seemed to have made him expressly to hate the Duke of Orleans." The latter was a handsome, gay young man, and a great favorite with the common people. Not that he ever did anything for them but spend their hard-earned money, but they were proud of him, and liked to see him riding through the streets on his prancing horse, bowing to right and left like a true prince. John the Fearless was bitterly jealous of him, and as there was no lawful way of getting rid of him, he chose a way of his own.

Orleans was dining one evening with the queen when a message was brought to him that King Charles wanted to see him at the Hotel St. Pol. He set out immediately to obey the summons, and was riding along the streets, singing and playing with his glove, a few attendants only being with him, when suddenly a band of twenty armed men sprang out upon him from a house where they had been lying in wait, crying out, "Death ! Death !" "What's all this about?" inquired the duke, "I am the Duke of Orleans." "Just what we want," was the answer; and they fell upon him and fairly hacked him to pieces, so that when his servants came to look for the body, they could not

find it all at once; the brains were scattered over the pavement, and a hand was picked up the next day out of the mud.

The Duke of Burgundy seemed very much distressed by what had happened—perhaps he was so. Perhaps he would have gladly called the dead man to life again. He attended the funeral and wept bitterly when he saw the disfigured features. No one then thought of his being the murderer; but when people began to inquire into what had been done, his guilt was so plain that he put spurs to his horse and galloped towards his own dominions. He soon came back, however, and boldly acknowledged the deed, saying that he did it for the good of France, and he made a celebrated preacher deliver a sermon in which the act was applauded as that of a good patriot.

But the quarrel was not at an end. The eldest son of the murdered duke married the daughter of the Count of Armagnac, a nobleman who now became the head of the Orleans party, which from this time was called by his name. For the next seven years the history of France is one scene of horror. An association was formed in Paris among the party who favored the duke of Burgundy, sometimes called "*Ecorcheurs*," which means "*Skinners*," and sometimes "*Cabo-chiens*," from the name of their leader, *Caboche*. These miscreants, under the guidance of butchers and hangmen, made the pretence of defending the city an excuse for murder, robbery, and outrages too horrible to be repeated. When any one offended them they only needed to say "*there's an Armagnac!*" and either dispatched him on the spot and plundered his

house, or dragged him off to prison till he should pay for his release. Then the Armagnacs forced their way into the city and took their turn in the work of destruction; next the duke of Burgundy appeared with an army, drove off the Armagnacs and again deluged the streets of Paris with blood, abandoning to torture and starvation those of the opposite party, seizing upon their property, and when they died, throwing their corpses into the common ditches, to be devoured by dogs and swine.

In the country it was no better. Every ruffian who wanted to live by plunder had only to put on the white scarf of the Armagnacs or the blue hood of the Burgundians, and he had a warrant for all his evil deeds. Every principle of justice and honor was forgotten by high and low. Secret associations, midnight drownings, hideous tortures, were as much the work of the great as of the most degraded. The streets were paraded day and night by parties of Cabochiens, armed with knife in hand and mallet on shoulder, keeping order by striking down instantly all who opposed them. While such things were going on, it was only natural that the enemies of France should take the occasion to invade her blood-stained soil. News came that Henry the Fifth was on his way from England, and the Hundred Years' war broke out anew.

Even if Henry's claim had been a good one, the French nobles would hardly have stood by quietly and allowed him to conquer their country. They could destroy one another, but wanted no stranger to meddle in their business. Almost the whole nobility of France rushed into this fatal war. The armies met upon the

field of Agincourt, where was fought the third of those great battles gained by a handful of English over a force many times greater than their own. The story of Crécy and Poitiers was repeated. The French, hasty, impetuous, and unskillfully placed by the Constable d'Albret, their leader, were driven back in confusion, while the cool-headed English king took advantage of every point left open to him.

When King Henry had conquered the whole of Normandy, the princes in Paris began to think it was time to be up and doing. The Dauphin Charles was now sixteen, old enough to have some share in the government; and, as he had always been under the influence of the Orleanist party, had never been on good terms with the Duke of Burgundy. But in order that they might arrange together some measures for driving back the English, the Duke was invited to meet Charles on the bridge of Montereau. His friends warned him that he placed his life in danger, but he justified his name by turning a deaf ear to them. A pavilion was made in the middle of the bridge into which the Dauphin and the Duke entered, each with ten attendants. The Duke took off his plumed hat and bent his knee before the son of his King. While in this position, a follower of the Dauphin, named Tanneguy-Duchatel, struck him a furious blow on the head with a hatchet, and others rushed forward and finished the work with their swords. Those who were with him were either killed or taken prisoners. Thus perished, in the prime of life, John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy. The murder of Orleans was avenged.

We come now to the last scene in which we shall

see Charles the Sixth play the puppet in the hands of his enemies, for all were his enemies, whether French or English. There was none to care for the silent sufferer, to whom gleams of reason came just often enough to show him the mournful state of his country, and arouse him to make a feeble effort to stay the tide of her distresses. Philip of Burgundy, the son of the murdered duke, ranged himself on the side of the English, in hopes of revenge on the Armagnacs. The Queen, who hated her son, eagerly followed him, and a treaty was made at Troyes in 1520 between Henry and Charles, which goes almost beyond the power of imagination to dream of. Henry the Fifth was to marry Charles's daughter Catherine, was to be Regent of France during the life-time of its sovereign, and king at his death. Not a word of the Dauphin, except that both parties bound themselves to have nothing to do with Charles, "calling himself Dauphin." The poor crazy king signed the treaty, probably without knowing what he was doing; and such was the state of wretchedness to which the people of France had been reduced, that they were actually satisfied with the treaty of Troyes, which gave them into the hands of the stranger.

Armagnac is now made Constable, and Queen Isabella, disgraced, is shut up in a castle away from the capital. Children in the street who have been taught to sing a song beginning "Burgundy's duke, God give thee joy," are beaten to the ground without knowing why; Armagnac is everything.

And now once more the scene changes. The Queen, though closely watched, manages to send her golden

seal to the Duke of Burgundy, with the message that if he will call for her, she will go with him. The Duke would have come on a slighter invitation. He appears at Paris with an army; the mob, at sight of him, recovers heart and begins again the work of destruction; the Constable d'Armagnac is torn to pieces, amidst ferocious howls and cries of joy; the prisons, into which the Armagnacs had at first been thrust, are broken open and the prisoners murdered one by one; those who shut themselves up are smoked out; others are pitched from the windows and caught on pikes by the crowd below; cries of "Burgundy! Death to the Armagnacs!" fill the air; the Constable's body, hewn in quarters, is distributed about the town so that all may see it; little children play in the streets with the corpses; strips of flesh are cut from the bleeding backs of the Armagnacs and left hanging to the neck, to represent the white scarfs they wore; the Duke of Burgundy in vain tries to restore order, even shaking hands with the head-butcher, to make friends with him; fiends seem to have taken the place of men.

At last the butchers began to be worn out by their excesses; a few of them were executed, and something like quiet restored. Henry of England, in the meantime, was attending to his business though the French had forgotten theirs. He laid siege to the old city of Rouen, taken from his ancestor John Lackland by Philip Augustus more than two hundred years before, and, having taken it, pursued his victorious march through the country.


Two years more saw both kings laid in the grave; and strange to say, Henry, young and strong when they

put their hands together to the treaty of Troyes, was the first to go. The one whose life had been a living death was left for a month or two longer, constantly mourning for his good son Henry, his dear Henry, who, to his disordered mind, replaced the children to whom he had been so many years a stranger.

When the common people knew that their king was dead, the old affection which had given him the name of the *Bien-aimé*—the Well-beloved—burst out afresh. They went in crowds to the Hotel St. Pol to gaze for the last time on those wasted features which had never looked on them but with kindness; they sobbed and cried and said they should never again have a king so good to them as he had been—that he had gone to his rest and reward, while nothing was left to them but sorrow. Only a few officers, whose duty made it necessary, accompanied the body of the king to its tomb in St. Denis. Not one of his own family was there, and no person of high rank except the English Duke of Bedford; but the hearts of his people, a nobler retinue, were with him to the end.

CHAPTER XV.

CHARLES THE VICTORIOUS.—1422–1461.

T would have been hard to tell who was King of France now. There was a little English baby, nine months old, proclaimed in Paris under the name of Henry the Sixth. And there was Charles the Seventh, of France, twenty years old, who

called himself king, but had not been crowned, and didn't quite know what to do about it. He was an indolent young man, with no taste for fighting, and never went to a battle if he could help it, though he was most absurdly called *The Victorious*, because stout work was done, although it was done by others.

We can scarcely believe that this descendant of Hugh Capet lived quietly in the town of Bourges, amusing himself in various ways, even talking of leaving France altogether to the English, and taking refuge elsewhere.

If he had stopped his dancing and singing long enough to go about a little among his own people, (for in the south of France there were large districts not yet conquered by the English), he would have seen a sorry state of things. An old writer says: "There was nothing but a horrible confusion, poverty, solitude and fear. Even the cattle, accustomed to the *larum-bell*, the sign of the enemy's approach, would at its sound run home of themselves." The country was infested with wolves, who fought for the bodies of the dead, and even made their way into the cities in search of prey. The burying-grounds, with their hastily made graves, were full of them.

At one time food was so scarce that when the dog-killer went his rounds he was followed by a crowd of poor people who would seize the carcasses of the animals and devour them greedily, entrails and all, to satisfy their cruel hunger. In some of the cities they tried to relieve their misery by a strange amusement. These starving wretches would go by night to the cemeteries, hundreds of them together, and dance and

sing and shout madly among the graves so as to forget, for a little while at least, what they suffered in the day-time. This was called the "Danse Macabre" or dance of death. In the morning, exhausted by their wild gayety, they would creep back to their wretched homes.

Charles saw nothing of all this; if it was told him he probably laughed at it as a good joke. He always had enough to eat and drink, though according to the story, not always enough to wear. It is said that a shoemaker from whom he ordered a pair of boots refused to leave them without the money, which Charles did not have. But nothing disturbed his easy good-nature. Boots or no boots, he enjoyed life as he went along.

In the meantime, the boy-king at Paris, the little son of Henry the Sixth, was growing up under the care of his uncles, sometimes in London, sometimes in Paris, as the case might be. The Duke of Bedford, who had been left Regent of France by Henry the Eighth, was an upright man, but could do little to lessen the miseries caused by the war. Besides, his great object in life was to conquer the rest of France, not to make it pleasant for the part already conquered.

Queen Isabella, who might have done so much good and who did so much harm, lived quite alone with her servants in the great hotel St. Pol, forlornly enough, for though the English lords treated her with outward respect she must have known that they despised her. Little Henry was once riding by her palace when some one pointed to an old woman standing at one of the windows and told him it was his grandmother. He lifted

his hat respectfully; the Queen bowed very low to him, then turned away and burst into tears. She lived long enough to repent of her misdoings, whether she did so or not. When she died, the sculptor who was told to make a tomb for her carved a wolf on it as an emblem of her cruelty and greediness, instead of a dog, the emblem of fidelity, which was sometimes put on tomb-stones.

The war gradually narrowed itself down into a contest for the possession of the town of Orleans. The English, who were besieging it had built a sort of town outside of it, with great towers called bastilles, from which they could fire their stone cannon-balls into the town; for by this time cannon had come into common use. All the bravest and most experienced men on both sides had collected about this important place, and each party felt that the final victory would be with the one who should win it.

The Duke of Bedford had sent from Paris a large supply of food for the English, among which there were many barrels of salted herrings. The French, shut up in the town, hearing of this, thought it was a fine chance to get in some provisions, of which they were greatly in need. So they sent out a party of soldiers to meet the herrings and other good things, but made their attack so rashly that they were driven back in confusion, while the barrels were burst open by the cannon-balls and their contents scattered on the ground. This is called in ridicule, the "Battle of the Herrings," because there were more fish than soldiers to be found on the field afterwards.

We must now leave the scene of war, and wander

away to the village of Domrémy, in Lorraine, where there lived at this time a young peasant girl named Jeanne Darc. Her father and mother were plain, respectable people, and she helped them with whatever they had to do, sometimes tending cattle and sheep in the fields, sometimes sewing with her mother in the house. From her childhood she had always had a horror of the English. One day when she was about nine years old, the dreadful cry was heard, "The English are coming!" and her family and all the people who could get away ran off as fast as they could, only to find on their return that their pretty village had been sacked and burnt to the ground. From thinking a great deal about these things, and at the same time keeping long fasts until her body was worn out and she became a little light-headed from weakness, she began to fancy that she saw wonderful visions of saints and angels, and heard heavenly voices telling her that she should deliver France from the enemy.

This conviction of her divine mission increased until she felt impelled to set out for Orleans to carry it out, much against her father's will. When she sent word to the commanding French general that she had come to raise the siege, and to have the king crowned at Rheims, he said, "Box the girl's ears and send her home." But she kept on quietly until she found some one who would take her to the king. By this time every body had heard of the Maid, and her visions and her voices and her promises; and without believing in her, all were curious to see her. She was tall and fine-looking, and for convenience in riding on horseback,

put on a man's dress, which was quite suitable for one who was going to fight.

There are several wonderful stories told about her, which were fully believed in by the people of that time. One was that she described an old sword with five crosses on the blade which nobody then living had ever seen, but which was found behind the altar of St. Catherine's Church at Fierbois, just where she said it would be. Another was that when she was brought into the presence of the Dauphin he purposely retired among the crowd, and sent forward a nobleman who pretended to be the King; and that she put this man aside and picked out the real Charles in a minute without ever having seen him. And still another, that she took him aside and told him of a certain prayer he had made, which no one could possibly know of but himself.

No doubt these things could easily be explained if we knew a little more about them; but at any rate, both Charles and his advisers pretended to be convinced by them. They thought it more prudent, however, to get the opinions of some learned clergymen on the subject, and had her examined by them to see whether her visions did not come from evil spirits instead of good ones. Some of her answers are so shrewd that it is plain she had plenty of mother-wit, if nothing else. One wise doctor said: "If it is God's will to deliver France by your means, he has no need of soldiers." She answered instantly, "The soldiers will do the fighting, and God will give them the victory." Another, who came from a part of France where people did not speak very good French, asked

her what language the heavenly Voices spoke to her. "A better one than yours," she retorted. None of the old gentlemen laughed at this, as they would do now-a-days if a young girl made them such a sharp answer, but on the whole they decided that it was quite safe to let her go on and do what she could.

And now we have her at last just as she had been longing to be. Mounted on a magnificent white war-horse, dressed in a shining suit of armor, the old sword, well-polished, hanging from her belt, a white banner embroidered with golden lilies carried before her, and a large body of men-at-arms at her back, escorting a supply of provisions—the young peasant-girl set boldly forward to fulfill her mission; to save France and crown its lawful king. Strangely enough, the English offered no opposition, and she passed safely into the city of Orleans.

When the first wild shout of joy that greeted her arrival had ceased, Jeanne set about her work. I can not tell you all the particulars of this strange story. No wonder that the English thought she was helped by evil spirits. In less than two weeks they met with such continual defeats in the fights which took place between them and the soldiers from the city, that they moved off of their own accord, leaving behind them not only their baggage and artillery, but also their wounded companions and many French prisoners.

The first part of the Maid's promise was fulfilled; she had raised the siege of Orleans. Can you wonder that the people were almost beside themselves with wonder and delight?

When the English had gone away, Jeanne went out

to meet the king. Charles was much pleased to see her and took off his cap to her, which was a rare piece of condescension in a king; but when she wanted him to go on to Rheims and be crowned, he hung his head and made all sorts of objections; he had not troops enough, he had no money, the English had possession of the city and of all the country leading to it. It did not seem to him, as it did to the Maid, that he could cut his way through; and it was only after repeated urging that he at last got up spirit enough to set out.

On the way they had some splendid successes, and as they drew near the city of Rheims the gates opened, and a deputation came out, offering Charles the keys. There, in the beautiful cathedral, with his great men about him and the Maiden, with her beloved standard in her hand, at his side, he was crowned king of France. The archbishop anointed his head with the holy oil from the same vial, if we may believe what we are told, from which it was poured on the head of Clovis as he knelt at the same spot. Jeanne was overcome, and cried like a baby. She fell at the king's feet and clasped his knees, exclaiming in a passion of tears that now she had done what she was sent to do, and that since the gentle king was crowned, all she asked was that she might go home and tend sheep again on her father's farm.

The king did not wish her to go home so long as he thought she could be of any use to him, but neither did he help her heartily, and matters dragged along very unsatisfactorily. He gave her father a title of nobility, with the name of De Lys, in memory of the

lilies on her banner; but she would much rather have had him work vigorously in driving out the English. Months passed away without any great change; sometimes one party had the advantage, sometimes the other; nothing could rouse the sluggish Charles into making any exertion.

At last the end came. Jeanne had made a successful attack on Compiègne, and most of the army had forced their way in; but she herself and a few soldiers were still outside, fighting. Suddenly the gates were shut and the drawbridge raised, and she was left at the mercy of the enemy. It was said at the time that this was done intentionally; but it seems more probable that the commander in the city feared that the English would enter again, and wished to make sure of the prize. At all events, we can give him the benefit of the doubt.

Left thus almost alone, the Maid became a mark for all eyes. She was easily recognized by her armor, which was well known in both armies, and a soldier in the service of Count John of Luxembourg, (who was a knight in the Burgundian army), pulled her off her horse, and took her to his master. Jeanne Darc was a prisoner in the hands of her enemies.

The Count was poor and the Duke of Bedford knew it. Taking him on his weak side the Duke offered him a large sum of money—ten thousand francs—if he would sell the helpless prisoner, that the vindictive English nation might do with her as they would. He hesitated a long time over the bargain, and his wife fell on her knees before him entreating him not to disgrace himself. If he had any feelings of honor he must have

known what a shameful trade it was; but the temptation was too strong. The money was paid and the English seized their prey.

And where was Charles the Seventh all this time? Was he straining every nerve to raise a ransom for the poor girl, which the rules of war would have obliged the Count to take? Was he making appeals to her countrymen not to let the favorite of Heaven, as they had long thought her, fall into the hands of the wolves who were thirsting for her blood? Did he offer English prisoners, of whom he had many, in exchange? He did absolutely nothing. He sat still in stupid indifference and left her to her fate.

The English Regent, the Duke of Bedford, knowing that all the world would cry shame upon him if he killed a defenceless prisoner who had been taken in open fight, did the most cruel thing that wickedness could devise—he handed her over to the bishops. They pretended to think her an enemy to the Church and a sorceress who used unlawful arts, though it was plain to every one who had ever been with her that she was as religious as she was patriotic; but they were friends of the English and angry because she had helped her own countrymen against them, so it was resolved that she should die.

If they had hanged or beheaded her at once, it would have been merciful in comparison with their methods. Sixteen times did they bring her out from the dungeon, with heavy irons on her hands and feet, to answer the cruel questions in which they tried in every way to entrap her into saying that she had been helped by the devil. She gave such simple, straight-

forward answers, so wise too, that they failed to make out what they wanted to, and finally induced her to sign a paper, (which she had to do by making a mark with the pen, for she could not write), confessing that she had been wrong in some things she believed in.

She was finally pronounced guilty of heresy, and condemned to be kept in prison for life with nothing to eat and drink but "the bread of affliction and the water of affliction." But nothing short of her death would satisfy the English; and making a miserable excuse about her having broken a promise to them, her judges condemned her to be burnt alive.

She had no time for preparation, and she asked for none, for she knew too well that it would be refused. While they were passing the sentence a great pile of sticks was laid up in the market-place at Rouen, and from the hall of judgment she was led out to it. Over the scaffold were written the words, "Heretic, apostate, idolater." She did not see them, for she was humbly kneeling in prayer until she was led to the top of the dreadful pile; then the torch was set to it and as the flames blazed up around her she was seen at the last moment pressing the crucifix to her lips.

No Frenchman—no Englishman—should read poor Jeanne's story without tears of grief and shame.

Though the Maid of Orleans was dead, her work went on. A very wise and able man called the Count de Richemont, who was Constable of France, but had been banished from court by the same jealous favorites who had set the king against Jeanne, was recalled and made prime minister. The Duke of Burgundy was very tired of fighting, and was persuaded to

make peace with Charles on his own account by the treaty of Arras, leaving the English to get out of the war in any way they thought proper.

This, then, was the end of the long and murderous strife between the Burgundians and the Armagnacs. Both sides agreed to forgive and forget, and we see the beginning of better times in the fact then when Paris was taken from the English, neither party tried to take vengeance on the old enemies who were found there. Charles entered his capital in triumph after an absence of nineteen years.

A French writer who lived at that time calls this king "Charles the Well-served," which would be a better title for him than the more common one of The Victorious. It was not alone in war that he found faithful servants. Money has been called "the sinews of war;" it was the very back-bone of Charles's, and without the generous assistance of a rich merchant named Jacques Cœur, he might never have won back his whole country. True to his character, the king was afterwards basely ungrateful to him; but France had been saved.

A sketch of times like these would not be complete if no mention were made of a state of things that could not have existed in any century later than the fifteenth. This was the utter lawlessness of the great nobility, not only towards their dependents, but even to one another. We read of a Duke of Brittany who starves his brother to death within hearing of the passers-by, of whom he piteously begs a morsel of bread for charity; of a Count of Guelders who drags his old father out of bed, makes him walk on foot many miles bare-foot

through the snow, and then throws him into an underground dungeon, from which he never comes out alive; of a Lord of Giac's poisoning his wife, and then making her get on horseback behind him and ride till she dropped dead; and lastly, of a nobleman named De Retz, who was proved to have enticed more than a hundred little children into his castle, and then murdered them for his own pleasure. The tears and groans of the parents as they told their pitiful stories moved the judges' hearts, and they shuddered with horror, though they were used to hearing such things. De Retz was condemned to be burned; but being of noble blood, the executioner was allowed to strangle him first, that he might not suffer.

After the peace of Arras a change seemed to come over the character of the king. He was just as ungrateful as ever, but he became more energetic, and seems during that part of his life to have been quite the model of a "working king." Some writers say that this is due to the influence of Agnes Sorel, one of the queen's ladies of honor, who became a favorite with Charles, and is said to have shamed him into behaving like a man; others think it was the good and sensible men about him, Richemont and others, whose example roused him to action when he was tired of the follies of his youth.

Whatever it was, France had reason to be thankful. Among other great reforms was the establishment of a standing army, or body of regularly paid troops, so that there could be no more excuse for bands of "skinnners" to desolate the country thus protected. The detested English were driven out of one place

after another, until in 1453 not a foot of French soil remained in their hands except Calais and a little strip around it. The Hundred Years' War was over.

The latter years of Charles the Seventh's life are sad enough. He grew indolent and careless again, but that did little harm now that everything was in good working order. His worst trials came from his undutiful and perverse son, Louis the Dauphin, who had been from his boyhood a thorn in his father's side. When he was only seventeen he joined in an insurrection called the "Praguerie," and at the close of it insolently said to his father, "My lord, if you will not pardon the rebels, I must go back with them, for I promised them I would." "Louis," answered the king, "the gates are open, and if they are not wide enough, I'll have a hundred feet of wall knocked down for you, so that you can go where you please."

But in spite of his coolness, Charles felt ill at ease, and sank into a state of low spirits that was not much better than his father's insanity. One of his counselors wrote to him, "It pleases you to be shut up in castles, wretched places, and all sorts of little holes, without showing yourself to your people and listening to their troubles." He had troubles enough of his own, poor man, and longed to see the Dauphin, who, knowing that his father was failing in health, was quietly waiting in Flanders for him to die. Charles became daily more unhappy, and finally, taking it into his poor weak head that Louis wanted to poison him, refused to eat anything. In vain his favorite son, the Duke of Berri, offered to taste all the food first himself; in vain the physicians and attendants tried to

convince him of the folly of throwing away his life through fear of death; he persisted with all the obstinacy of a disordered mind, and in a few days literally starved himself to death. And that was the end, so far as this world is concerned, of Charles the Seventh; the Victorious, the Well-served, the Ungrateful.

CHAPTER XVI.

LOUIS XI.—1461—1483.



HARLES the Seventh had named his oldest son after Saint Louis, in the hope that he might resemble him in character. He lived long enough to see how vain his hopes were. The religion which had dignified and ennobled the character of Louis the Ninth became in Louis the Eleventh only the lowest kind of superstition. He was never tired of praying to the Saints, who were the only sacred beings he seemed to consider worthy of his attention; but his prayers were not that he might "do justice and love mercy," but always that he might be successful in some undertaking or be spared from some loss.

He walked about with half a dozen little leaden images of different saints stuck in his cap, and when he wanted anything very much, off would come the cap, and he would select the image of that saint who he imagined would be most likely to favor the matter in hand; then setting the morsel of lead on a table,

he would kneel before it, quite regardless of the presence of others, and mutter his petitions.

As far as looks went, Louis was very little like a king. He had a face full of vulgar cunning, and walked in an awkward, shambling manner; and as he chose to go about in garments which a respectable merchant would have been ashamed of, there was no "majesty" about him except the name. Yet this man of all others, was the first European prince to be addressed by the title "Your Majesty." He had one settled purpose in his mind, and from this he never turned aside. It was to bring all ranks of people, from princes to serfs, into something as nearly like slavery as possible, and of this nation of slaves he was to be the only master. He did not always succeed with the great; but the poorer classes, who had never tasted the sweets of liberty, were soon ground down into absolute submission to his will.

The nobility were harder to manage. Being indignant at Louis's tyrannical interference with their privileges, a great number of them bound themselves together in what they called "The League for the Public Good." Philip de Comines, a historian who lived at that time, and who takes up the place left vacant by Froissart, says that this was formed "to remonstrate with the king upon the bad order and injustice he kept up in his kingdom." The League was kept secret as long as possible, but Louis employed too many spies to be long ignorant of any thing that went on, and in an address to his people on the subject he remarked that if he had allowed his vassals to continue tyrannizing over their own subjects, as they had been used to

doing, they never would have concerned themselves about the "Public Good." This was very true, but it did not make the nobles more contented with the king's severity towards themselves.

We can judge of the nature of this severity when we read that he once had two gentlemen's ears cut off for killing a hare on their own land! Such a king could not be very popular with the "privileged classes."

Louis's treatment of the Cardinal de Balue was characteristic. This man was the son of a tailor, and Louis, finding him quick-witted and serviceable, had raised him to one high place after another, and at last required the Pope to make him a Cardinal. Instead of being entirely devoted to the interests of his benefactor, Balue engaged in various plots against him, and was at last found out. He richly deserved hanging, but that would have been too merciful for Louis, who wanted the pleasure of knowing that he was living and suffering.

He had an iron cage, about eight feet square and seven high, placed in the strong castle of Loches, and in this the unfortunate man was shut up like a wild beast for eleven years. The door was never opened; his food was passed in to him through a grating; his hair and nails grew to be like a mane and claws. It is said that Louis occasionally went to feast his eyes upon this pleasant sight.

At last another Pope wanted the Cardinal let out, and as the king himself was nearly done with the world by that time, and no longer able to go and visit his former favorite, the request was granted.

The chief of Louis's "great vassals" was Charles

the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, and the greater part of Charles's ten years' reign was only one long duel with his crafty neighbor. Louis, though cautious to excess, at one time formed the singular resolution of going to visit the Duke of Burgundy in his own dominions, to settle one of their innumerable quarrels. Being provided with a "safe-conduct" he went to Peronne, where the duke met him with a great show of respect, kissed him and called him his dear brother, and they walked into the town together, Louis laying his hand familiarly on Charles's shoulder. They talked over their affairs for some days in a friendly manner, when suddenly the Duke received news that some secret agents of Louis had been exciting an insurrection in the Flemish town of Liége. At this his rage knew no bounds. He was always hot-tempered, but this lashed him to fury. He had Louis locked up in the fortress where he was lodged, and for three days thought over plans of vengeance, determining to kill him then and there. During one whole night he never undressed, but walked back and forth in his room in wild agitation. At last his anger cooled down a little, and some of his advisers, among whom was Philip de Comines, persuaded him not to violate his kingly word given in the safe-conduct, but to let Louis go, and try to revenge himself in some more creditable way.

Louis was released, but Charles had his revenge. After forcing him to sign a treaty similar to the one he had broken, the Duke said: "And now please to come with me to Liége to help me punish the treason of these people of Liége, committed all through your

means!" The King did not dare to refuse, and much did it astonish the people he had paid to shout, "Hurrah for France!" to see him riding into the town with their angry Duke, shouting at the top of his voice, "Hurrah for Burgundy!" Charles forced him first to witness the storming and sacking of the town, and afterward to go with him in a solemn procession to the great cathedral to give thanks for the victory; then, burning with rage and shame, he was allowed to depart.

The people of Paris were not so much afraid of Louis but that they taught their parrots to scream out, "Peronne!" at the top of their voices. Louis did not go back there for some time, but one of his "gossips" was kept quite busy in wringing the necks of the poor birds, who only did as they had been told. Louis probably wished that they had but one neck, that he might wring it once for all and have done with it.

In Sir Walter Scott's novel of *Quentin Durward* there is a spirited account of this visit of Louis's, bringing out in strong relief the different characters of the King and the Duke.

As the history of France includes that of Burgundy, I must tell you here what remains of the story of Charles the Bold. Tired at last of measuring his strength against Louis, he picked a quarrel with the Swiss mountaineers, and invaded their country. Here he got exactly what he deserved—a tremendous defeat—at the battle of Granson. He had taken a great quantity of splendid things with him—why, one can hardly imagine, unless it was to impress these plain

people with his vast wealth,—but he had to run away, leaving them all behind. A whole dinner-service of solid silver, a crown loaded down with jewels, the collar of the Order of the Golden Fleece, founded by his father, Philip the Good, which was a mass of precious stones, hundreds of pieces of magnificent silk, velvet, lace, damask, cloth of gold—all these and many more did the Duke leave behind him at Granson.

They did the Swiss little good, however. The silver they supposed to be pewter, and sold it for a few pence; the gorgeous cloths and the tapestry from Arras, worth almost its weight in gold, were sold by the yard in shops like sixpenny calico; the Duke's enormous solitaire diamond, which had once been worn by the Great Mogul in India, was picked up in the road and at first thrown away by the finder, who afterwards thought, that as it was a pretty piece of glass, he might get a few shillings for it, which he did. This at length found its way into the French crown, where it held its place for centuries as one of the richest jewels in Europe. Besides all these, there were whole barrells of money.

Charles is often called *The Rash*; he justified his name by making another attack on Switzerland within three months, and again the same scenes were repeated in the battle of Morat. So many men were killed here that a hill was made of their bodies, which was covered with earth, and went for three hundred years by the name of "*Bone-hill*." It was not dug down until some time in the eighteenth century.

Charles had not yet had enough fighting, so he next attacked the Duke of Lorraine at Nancy. This was the end. After the battle, which was another

overwhelming defeat, no Charles the Bold was to be seen. A search was made among the dead on the field, and there, lying face downward in a frozen marsh, lay all that was left of Louis's great enemy. As they raised the head from the ice in which it was imbedded, a piece of the skin came off, showing a ghastly wound.

The Duke of Lorraine had the dead body dressed in a white satin gown and laid on a bed of black velvet, under a black satin canopy; a ducal crown was placed on the disfigured head, and the gilded spurs of a knight bound on the heels. Then the generous Duke, having done all that he could for his rash and willful enemy, had him buried with the honors due to his rank.

To relate all the struggles between Louis and his great vassals, would fill a book. His enemies were a sort of Hydra; as soon as a head was cut off, others sprang up in its place. He generally came off victorious in these contests, but it was at the price of never enjoying a moment's peace. The grim irony of his invitation to the Count of St. Pol, Constable of France, is well known: "My cousin," he wrote to him, "weighty matters are pending, in which a head like yours would be of great use to us." In conversation with those near him, Louis added, that it was only the head of the Constable that he wanted—his body might stay where it was. He afterwards obtained the head and body together, and separated them at his pleasure.

One of his standing quarrels was with Edward the Fourth of England, against whom he had always some ground of complaint, but they did not come to actual fighting. At one time Edward invaded France

with a large army and much boasting, meaning to act over again the scenes of Crécy, Poitiers and Agincourt; but he had grown lazy and luxurious, and was bought off at the treaty of Peequigny, to the great disgust of his soldiers. Remembering John the Fearless at the bridge of Montereau, Louis provided against treachery by having a solid plank wall built in the center of the bridge on which he and Edward were to meet, without any opening except a lattice through which these two mighty kings did their talking. Having taken these precautions, they arranged the terms of peace.

Once more Edward made ready for an invasion of France, but the hand of death stopped him in the midst of his preparations, and Louis survived him but a short time. For two or three years before his death, the life of Louis the Eleventh had been only a wretched attempt at living. Conscious that his hand had been against every man, he imagined the hand of every man to be against him. He shut himself up in the gloomy old castle of Plessis-les-Tours, of which the grounds were filled with man-traps. A ghastly row of gibbets lined the approach to the castle, and the trees in the forest were loaded with "human fruit." His sentinels had orders to shoot or hang without inquiry any one who approached the castle except his own messenger; even his children and others of the royal family were not allowed to visit him without special invitation.

His three favorite companions for years had been his hangman, Tristan L' Hermite, whom he kept constantly busy; his barber, Olivier le Dain, who amused him by

his jests and familiarity; and lastly his physician, Jacques Coettier, a brutal fellow who had induced an astrologer to tell the king that he would live only three days after the doctor's death. Filled with this idea, Louis became almost a slave to this man, who managed to frighten him into giving him enormous sums of money.

As death approached Louis became more abjectly superstitious than ever. He begged one saint after another to spare his miserable life, but the saints paid no attention. He loaded himself with all sorts of relics—a finger of one dead saint, a toe of another, a shapeless fragment of bone from a third, hoping that somehow or other their holiness would strike in, and cure, not the wickedness of his heart, but the diseases of his body. When the people about him were praying for the health of his body and the salvation of his soul, he interrupted them: “Ask only for the cure of the body,” said he. “Don't plague the saint with too many things at once.” But all this did no good, and he found himself at last obliged to look the great Destroyer full in the face. Even then he tried to shut his eyes to it. “When the last moment has come,” said he to his attendants, “don't mention the word ‘death,’ but just say, ‘You must n't talk much;’ I shall understand you.” He gave all the directions for his funeral as minutely as if he had been an undertaker, seeming as if he could not forego the pleasure of being obeyed, even in death.

Louis the Eleventh has been called “the worst father, the worst son, and the most brutal husband in all Christendom.” At the same time, we must remember

that he did a great deal towards making France the united and powerful country which from his time it has remained. Many of his regulations were wise; he encouraged commerce, and did much to raise the condition of the middle classes, and though these benefits came from no motive higher than a sordid selfishness, it can not be denied that he left his country more prosperous than he found it. The people who had felt his tyranny and witnessed his degrading superstition could not appreciate this, however; and one of the most accurate of historians says, "For a long time past, no king of France had been so heavy on his people, or so hated by them."

CHAPTER XVII.

CHARLES VIII. LOUIS XII.—1483—1515.



SMALL, sickly boy of thirteen, so misshapen that he might almost be called deformed, was now King of France. The best thing known about him is that he was surnamed "The Courteous," and that personally he was much beloved. His father, Louis the Eleventh, had kept him ignorant, so that he might never interfere in the government. All the Latin he would let him learn was this saying: "*Qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare*;" "He who does not know how to deceive does not know how to reign." But the boy probably soon forgot it, for he seems to have been truthful, though he never

learned much that was worth knowing about governing. His sister, Lady Anne de Beaujeu, who had been made regent, was a very able woman ; spirited, but not self-willed, and knowing how to yield gracefully when it became necessary.

The States-General, assembled soon after the death of the late king, made a touching statement of the woes of the poor.

“During the last four years,” they said, “the King’s troops have been continually passing and repassing through France, and living on the people. The poor peasant must pay for the man who beats him, who carries off his property, who turns him out of his house. When the poor man has, by the sale of the clothes off his back, managed to pay his tax, then comes a new troop of soldiers, eating up and destroying the little provision he has left, and, not satisfied with what they find in his wretched hut, compelling him, with many blows, to go to the towns to seek for luxuries for them, such as wine, fine white bread and fish; so that, if God did not comfort the poor man, he would utterly despair. In Normandy, a countless multitude have died of hunger; others have killed their wives, their children and themselves, and others, fearing that if seen in the day-time they will be seized for not having paid their tax, are compelled to work at night.”

What a dreary picture of want and suffering! But it made little impression on the court people, who must have their splendid houses and furniture, their gorgeous dress and equipages, their almost countless servants and costly pleasures. The Lady Anne and

her council received the petitions most graciously, and promised that the matter should be looked into; some trifling reforms were made, and then every thing went on just as it had done before.

When Charles was twenty years old, his sister thought that the best thing he could do would be to marry Anne of Brittany, a rich heiress, whose father had lately died and left her that duchy. To be sure, he was betrothed to the daughter of Maximilian of Austria, and Maximilian was already married by proxy to Anne of Brittany, but such trifles made no difference, when a prize like this was in question. So Charles marched into Brittany with an army and besieged the city of Rennes, where the poor, deserted, half-married Duchess was living. Backed by his army, he won the day, and the Pope granted Anne a divorce from her distant and apparently indifferent husband.

Maximilian was very angry, for he had received a double insult, through his betrothed daughter and his betrothed wife; but the state of his affairs not allowing him to go to war with Charles, he made no trouble about it. He took back his daughter, who had been living in France ever since she was two years old, and was consoled not long afterward by being elected Emperor of Germany.

When Charles was married he did not even know how to read. He soon learned, however, for he felt ashamed of his ignorance; and as he was of a romantic turn of mind, he spent his time in poring over stories which told of the wonderful adventures met with by knights of the olden time. This filling his head with useless longings turned out to be a great injury

to him and his country in the end. Remembering an old claim of his family to Naples, he determined to go into Italy and conquer that country. He had no army ready for such an enterprise, and he was so poor that he had to borrow money to start with; but his head was full of wild visions of conquest, and sober reason was the last thing he wished to listen to. So, disregarding the advice of his sister and all his best friends, he set out for Rome. He had not learned the lesson that distant possessions are generally points of weakness, instead of strength, to a nation.

The Pope at that time was Alexander the Sixth, one of the most thoroughly wicked men who ever sat in the chair of St. Peter. When Charles asked him to bestow the kingdom of Naples upon him, he only hesitated for fear that it might bring him into trouble; not because it did not belong to either of them, nor to him. But at length he consented; Charles was anointed with oil as holy as the blessing of such a pope could make it, and prepared to continue his journey. Before he left Rome, however, he and the Pope fell out; his Holiness retired into his strong castle of St. Angelo, and Charles allowed his soldiers one day of free pillage in the city of Rome.

The soldiers being thus gratified, Charles kept on his way to the south, and long before he reached Naples, had the pleasure of hearing that the king and his son had both run away. The King, who was an atrociously bad man, was so hated by his people that they made Charles as welcome as possible, and entertained him with feasts and processions to his heart's content. There were bonfires and illuminations

and all sorts of brilliant shows, and the conqueror wrote home that he had found "an earthly paradise."

While he had been idling away his time in Naples, however, his enemies had been busily at work. A league was formed to cut off the retreat of his army, and he fought his way back into France, leaving only a rather weak garrison in Naples to maintain the honor and dignity of the French "conquest." Even this was not to last long. As soon as Charles was fairly out of sight, the young King of Naples (for the old one had ended his worthless life soon after being driven out of his kingdom), came back with the brave Gonsalvo de Cordova, Ferdinand of Aragon's "Great Captain," to help him, and made short work of the invaders. The French garrison was soon forced to surrender, and a fever broke out which carried off great numbers of them. A mere fragment of the gallant army remained, and were permitted to return unmolested to France.

After the King's return he led an idle, intemperate life, neglecting all business of importance and giving himself up to low pleasures. At length these too, began to pall upon him, and for a change he proposed to make a reform, beginning with himself.

At twenty-eight years old it is a little late to try such a plan, when one's youth has been passed in frivolity and dissipation, but Charles was quite in earnest. He had read that his ancestor, St. Louis, heard the complaints of the people, sitting under an oak tree, so he found a tree for himself and invited people to bring their causes before him. But he did not live to show what he might have done in his new state of mind. Going with the Queen one day to look

at a game of tennis, they had to pass through a gallery which had a very low door. Though he was short of stature he hit his head against this, and felt a little dizzy, but went on and watched the game. In coming back to the palace, while he was passing through this same gallery he suddenly lost consciousness; he was laid down on a wretched straw mattress that happened to be there, and in a few hours breathed his life away. His kindness of heart had made those about him so fond of him that all his faults were forgotten. His queen, Anne of Brittany, grieved wildly over his loss, and one of his servants is said to have died of sorrow. How easy it would have been for any King of France in those days to make himself hero and saint for such long-suffering and loyal subjects!

The Fifteenth Century was now coming to an end. It was a great century—the turning point between the old time and the new. In all the countries in the world, before that time, there were no printed books and only a few written ones; the Atlantic was not crossed and America discovered until nearly the end of that century, and it was only then that a very bold navigator had ventured to coast around the continent of Africa and so open a new sea-road to Asia and the East Indies.

We think our nineteenth century a wonderful one, with its railroads, steamboats and telegraphs, its sun-pictures, its immense advance in all the sciences, including the science of free government. But when we look far enough back to see the world as it was before gunpowder was invented or the mariner's compass brought into general use, and while printing was

unknown, we get some idea of the darkness of the centuries before the fifteenth, and we see that the coming of that era was somewhat like a surmise which made our later discoveries possible. It was in this age that France and Spain grew from groups of petty states at war among themselves, into strong kingdoms, having each a common interest—the prosperity and glory of the whole nation. England, too, had seen the last of her great vassals, her Warwicks and Buckinghams, who openly rebelled against and defied their king. In short, we have now left behind the Middle Ages, and are fairly launched upon the sea of Modern History.

As Charles the Eighth left no children, the crown fell to his cousin the Duke of Orleans, who now ascended the throne under the title of Louis the Twelfth. His life had up to this time been a hard one, for Louis the Eleventh had forced him to marry his daughter Jeanne, and he had been imprisoned by Anne of Beaujeu for plots against her government. But he had always been popular with the people. They loved him for his name, for his manliness, and for his nobility of character, before they found out that he was the people's friend. When one of his generals advised some harsh measures towards the enemies who had kept him so long in prison, he answered "It does not become the King of France to avenge the injuries of the Duke of Orleans." This generous sentiment united all hearts in his favor. From this time it may be said that he had not an enemy in his own country—a new order of things for a king of France.

His economy both in public and private affairs was

so great that some people accused him of meanness. When he heard this, he said, "I would rather have my courtiers laugh at my saving than have my people weep at my spending." He provided for the regular payment and support of his army, so that they should no longer live by plundering the people, and then made pillage punishable with death.

When the States-General met, they gave him the title of "Father of his Country," and surely no king of France ever deserved it better. The one blot upon his private character is his separation from Jeanne, the unfortunate daughter of Louis the Eleventh, to whom he had been married in his early youth. After obtaining from the infamous Pope Alexander the Sixth a divorce from her, he made use of his freedom to marry Anne of Brittany, once more uniting that coveted duchy to the Kingdom of France. Anne was a woman of remarkable purity and goodness, and the French court, which had been noted for its dissipation and wicked gayety, became a model of propriety. The people could hardly get used to living under a king who paid his debts and lowered the taxes of his own accord; and it seemed to them as if the Golden Age they had read of had come to them in reality.

But alas for the weakness of human nature! No sooner was the kingdom established in such peace and prosperity as had hardly been dreamed of since the days of Saint Louis, than the demon of ambition broke loose and whispered to him the fatal word—Italy!

We must recall the old imaginary claim to the kingdom of Naples—that country bestowed first by a

pope who had no right to give it, on Charles of Anjou, who had no right to take it; given again by another pope to Louis of Anjou, brother of Charles the Wise, and since him vainly claimed by a succession of kings and dukes—this same old prize was still before the eyes of Louis the Twelfth, and he longed to stretch forth his hand and grasp it.

With a well appointed army he marched southward, on his way to take possession of the Duchy of Milan, to which he also advanced some shadowy claim; then proceeded to Naples, which had a king of its own whom Ferdinand the Catholic, (King of Spain and husband of Isabella,) was trying to drive out. A shameful agreement was entered into between him and Louis, that they should conquer Naples together and then divide it between them. The Pope was quite ready to do his part, and “bestowed” the country on the two kings who wished to steal it, while the rightful sovereign, being allowed to retire into France, spent the rest of his days there in obscurity.

As soon as the prize was fairly theirs, the royal wolves began to quarrel over it,—the boundaries not having been very carefully settled,—each trying to get the lion’s share. The Spanish General, Gonsalvo de Cordova, and the hot climate together, were more than a match for the French, and once more a few stragglers, worn out with illness, were all that ever reached France out of the gallant army who had gone forth so bravely to fight for her.

It is impossible to relate here the plots and counter-plots, the tricks and surprises, by which the various sovereigns of Europe were constantly trying to outwit

each other, and which go by the name of diplomacy. A few principal facts are all we have room for, and the blank places must be left to be filled in by larger histories.

The warlike Pope Julius the Second had succeeded Alexander the Sixth, and an agreement called the League of Cambrai was made between him, Ferdinand of Spain, the Emperor Maximilian and Louis of France, against the Venetians, whose only fault was that they were becoming too powerful and prosperous. Louis defeated them in battle, and saw in imagination all the north of Italy in his power. Next we hear of a "Holy League" formed by the Pope with these very same people *against* France. Then comes another invasion, and more battles, and more losses and retreats, until at last we find Louis, attacked on one side by his old ally, Ferdinand of Spain and on the other by Henry the Eighth of England, forced to stay at home and defend his own territory. A battle was fought near Terouenne between the French and English, which was called by the latter "The Second Battle of the Spurs;" not because, as at Courtrai, the spurs were picked up by bushels on the field, but because the French used them so vigorously in running away. Louis had now at last had enough of war, and was glad to make peace. Pity that he had ever broken it!


Henry the Eighth had a gay young sister named Mary, not yet sixteen years old, whom he had promised to Charles of Austria, afterward the Emperor Charles the Fifth. Besides this royal lover, the Princess Mary had one of her own, the Duke of Suffolk, to whom she was sincerely attached. But neither royal betrothal

nor private affection could stand in the way when it was for the interest of kings to make a change; and the beautiful young girl was married to the man of fifty-three, worn out before his time by the hardships of war, and a martyr to gout. Louis naturally wanted to make life agreeable to his young wife, and in doing this did not remember that elderly people cannot change all their habits suddenly without risking their health. He had been used to dining (!) at eight in the morning; he now took his dinner at the newly-fashionable hour of noon. His bed-time had been six o'clock in the evening; now he often stayed up till midnight, for the balls and festivities in which the Queen delighted were sometimes prolonged to that unseemly hour. Just three months after the marriage-bells had rung out so merrily at the entry of the English queen, they tolled for the death of her husband.

No king had ever been so mourned in France since the death of Louis the Ninth. The people's grief was most sincere; they knew it was very unlikely they should ever have another such sovereign. He had no sons, and his daughter Claude had married her cousin, Francis d'Angoulême, also descended from the first Duke of Orleans. As there was no nearer male heir, he now became King of France, under the title of Francis the First.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FRANCIS I., THE KING OF THE GENTLEMEN.—1515–1547.

 HAVE done the best I could for France," said Louis the Twelfth on his death-bed, "but that big boy D'Angoulême will spoil it all."

The "big boy" was his son-in-law, Francis the First; a tall, handsome, self-willed youth of twenty, very much pleased to be a king, and so joyous in temper and affable in his manners that he became popular at once.

Francis soon had a brilliant court around him. It did not take the nobles long to find out that instead of the frugal ways of Louis XII. they were to have all sorts of expensive amusements, and that the more splendidly they were dressed the more welcome they would be; so money was spent like water. The King, who was a perfect specimen of physical beauty, was fond of all kinds of games where strength and skill were required, and these disposed him to martial exercises.

His first thought when he found himself a king was, naturally, of Italy, and in a few months he was on his way there with an immense army. The bloody battle of Marignano, the first in which he had ever been engaged, was a great victory for the French. Francis fought all day like a hero of romance, and at night lay down for a little rest with his head on a cannon, disdaining

a better couch than his meanest soldier had. Faint with thirst, he asked for some water; but all that could be found was tinged with blood, and he turned away in horror. It was still the custom, though the days of chivalry were past, for kings to make knights on the battle-field of those who had fought most bravely (always provided they were of "gentle blood"); but before availing himself of this privilege, Francis asked the brave Bayard, called the knight "*sans peur et sans reproche*," and already celebrated for many victories, to confer the honor upon him.

"Sire," said Bayard, "the king who has been anointed with oil sent down from Heaven, he who is the eldest son of the Church, is already knight over all other knights." "Make haste, friend Bayard," replied the King, "don't stop to quote laws to me, but do as I bid you." So he knelt down, and Bayard struck him with the flat of his sword, saying, "May it avail as much as if I were Roland or Oliver, Geoffrey or Baldwin; please God that in war you may never take flight!" Then he plunged his sword into the sheath, declaring that it should never be put to any meaner use.

Once more the reigning family was driven out of Milan. Two treaties of peace followed this short but brilliant campaign; one with the Swiss, who had been helping the Milanese, was called the "Perpetual Peace," and deserved its name better than many others so called, as it continued down to the French Revolution, (a period of two hundred and seventy-five years); the other, called a "Concordat," was an agreement with Pope Leo the Tenth, by which Francis gave up certain established rights, much to the

indignation of the people of France, who saw in this a direct attack upon their liberties. But the people of France had to get used to having their liberties cut off; from this time the laws were made according to the will of the king alone, without reference to the people's wishes, and they all ended with the words, "for such is our good pleasure." Taking away the power from the great vassals and leaving it with the king had made France a united and powerful nation; but in the hands of a king not wise and good enough to put the people's happiness before his own wishes, power became a dangerous weapon and led to those frightful abuses which brought on the terrible Revolution of 1789.

When a new emperor was to be elected for Germany, Francis, Henry the Eighth of England, and Charles the First of Spain, all strove for the position, and finally Charles, who at nineteen was as crafty as a man of fifty, succeeded in obtaining it, and was crowned under the name of Charles the Fifth. Francis, who had proposed to Charles that whoever should be defeated should bear the disappointment good-humoredly, forgot his fair speeches and hated Charles bitterly for his good fortune. The rest of his life was as much a long duel with his rival as had been that of Charles the Bold with his enemy Louis twenty years before. This time, however, the characters were reversed; it was the King of France, and not his enemy, who was rash, headlong and unlucky; while the Emperor, in his patient following out his own plans, and rising up stronger after each reverse, reminds us of Louis the Eleventh.

The first thing to be done, as each party considered, was to make friends with Henry the Eighth; and here, as usual, Charles was foremost in the race. While Francis was making preparations to entertain Henry at Calais in a style so splendid as to insure his goodwill, Charles quietly landed on the English coast without invitation and made Henry a visit; and so great was the effect of the Emperor's eloquence on this occasion, that when the latter went to his appointed meeting with Francis, his mind was already made up to favor the other side.

The Field of the Cloth of Gold has been too often described in English history to need more than a mention here. Have we not all before our mind's eye that gorgeous encampment near Calais, with its tents covered with silk and velvet and golden tissue, its standards glittering in the sun, its superb pavilions and fountains running with wine? Many a noble sold his forest or his castle to appear with honor in the gilded field; and the money expended on the feasts and tournaments that filled up the eighteen days of revelry would have kept the court of Louis the Twelfth for a year.

Francis and Henry were in excellent spirits. They laughed and jested with each other, and the King of France played some pretty rough practical jokes on his brother of England, such as tripping him up at wrestling, forcing his way into his tent before he was out of bed, and so on; but they parted in good humor, Francis feeling that he had shown off very well in the contest of luxury, and Henry a little jealous of the superior splendor of the French court to his own, which was almost hobnailed by comparison.

And what happened then? Instead of going directly home to England across Dover Straits, which was his nearest way, Brother Henry slipped round to Gravelines, a place in Flanders, which was a part of Charles's dominions, and there had another private interview with the Emperor!

The anger of Francis when he learned of his failure to gain over the king of England; was intense. He instantly declared war against the Emperor, and sent an army into Spain, which country Charles had inherited from his grandfather Ferdinand; and when Charles heard of it he said: "God be praised that I am not the one to begin the war; in a little while either I shall be a very poor Emperor or he will be a poor King of France." It was, indeed, a very poor King of France that remained when his wars were over, as we shall see.

The army left in Milan had been composed partly of Swiss soldiers, who, being mercenaries, and therefore not entirely under the control of the French, clamored constantly for their pay. This not being forthcoming, they refused to remain; and the Pope and the Emperor having combined their forces to drive the French out of Italy, the duchy of Milan was lost once more, for the third time within twenty years. It was afterwards found out that Louise of Savoy, the king's mother, who was one of the worst women of her time, had kept for her own use the money sent by the king to pay the Swiss soldiers. The mischief done to France by this infamous woman did not stop with her stealing the soldiers' pay. Her next victim was the Constable of France, Charles,

Duke of Bourbon, who was the richest, haughtiest and most powerful of all the king's subjects. When his wife died, Louise of Savoy, who admired him very much, wanted to marry him, and let him know it; he refused disdainfully, and from that moment she became his most bitter enemy, and induced Francis to take such measures against him that he formed the desperate resolution of going over to the Emperor, and did so.

It was agreed that there should be a threefold attack upon France, Bourbon invading it from the side of Germany, Charles from Spain, and Henry of England through Normandy. Besides this, the Duke was to have an independent kingdom made for himself out of Provence and Dauphiny, and was to marry the Emperor's sister, Eleanor.

Francis, in spite of these adverse circumstances, still clung to his darling plan, and again sent an army into Italy. After much valuable time had been trifled away, a battle was fought, in which the heroic Bayard received his death-wound. His troops were flying in every direction, but he would not be carried away. He made his men place him at the foot of a tree with his face to the enemy, and there calmly waited for death, which he knew could not be far off. The Duke of Bourbon, in hot pursuit of the flying foe, rode up to where Bayard lay and said a few words of respect and sympathy. "Don't mourn for me," answered Bayard; "I die in the discharge of my duty. It is you who are to be pitied, for being false to your king, your country and your oath." Bourbon retired without a word, and in three hours the knight without fear and without

reproach, breathed his last, honored and lamented by friend and foe.

After this the traitor Bourbon tried to ruin his native country by invading the southern part with an army of foreign soldiers; but the Spaniards despised him as much as the English are said to have despised Benedict Arnold in our own Revolution, and did not give him any hearty support. They slighted his advice, and would not let him carry out his plans; his army made an inglorious retreat, and he was forced back into Italy almost alone.

A story is told which shows what the best men in Spain thought of him. While he was there, Charles the Fifth asked the Marquis de Villena to receive Bourbon into his castle as a guest during his stay in Madrid. "I can refuse the king nothing," replied the Marquis; "but as soon as the traitor is out of the house I will set fire to it with my own hand. No man of honor could ever live in it again."

Once more did Francis rush madly into Italy at the head of an army, where the memorable battle of Pavia put an end for a time to his schemes of ambition. He was taken prisoner and carried to Madrid, where Charles kept him closely confined for many months. It was after this battle that he wrote the well-known letter to his mother in which he says there is nothing left to him but his honor and his life. A long imprisonment wore upon his spirits, and he finally signed a treaty which did little credit to his "honor." He promised to give up to Charles the countries of Burgundy, Flanders and Artois, to renounce his Italian claims, and to restore all the possessions of the Duke of Bourbon.

To insure Francis's fulfillment of his part of the treaty, his two sons, six and eight years old, were to be sent to Spain as hostages.

In the middle of the river Bidassoa, which for a short distance divides France from Spain, a large ship was anchored, which had the princes on board. King Francis was rowed out to this ship in a small boat; the boys knelt down very prettily before their father, who laid a hand on the head of each and said, "God bless you, my children;" then the little fellows were put into the small boat and rowed over to the Spanish side of the river, while King Francis was taken to the French side. There he found a fine horse standing ready, saddled and bridled; he leaped on its back, exclaiming, "Now I am again a king!" and putting spurs to his steed, he rode off on a full gallop to his own city of Bayonne, where his mother and sister were waiting for him.

Humiliating as the agreement was by which Francis had gained his freedom, we should think better of him if he had kept his word like a man and a gentleman, and performed what he promised. This, however, he never meant to do; but pretending that the treaty had been signed through compulsion, he utterly refused to fulfill it.

Charles was naturally very angry when he found how he had been cheated, calling Francis several uncomplimentary names, like coward and scoundrel, and demanding that if he had any respect for his plighted word as a knight and a king he should return and give himself up according to promise. Francis paid no attention to this summons, but made another so-called

"Holy League" with the Pope and Henry the Eighth, who were both disgusted with Charles for different reasons, and ready to join any thing or any body who would help them to injure him.

So the war went on for some years more, nothing happening of great importance. Francis was given up to pleasure and spent his time with worthless favorites, while his generals were losing ground on every side and his sons were still prisoners in Madrid. Bourbon was killed while leading his army against the city of Rome, and at length, after much useless bloodshed, Charles and Francis agreed to make peace. As neither of them cared to meet face to face again, the Emperor sent his aunt, Margaret of Austria, and Francis sent his mother, Louise, to Cambrai, and there these two clever women got up an agreement which was called "The Ladies' Peace," which answered its purpose quite as well as a Gentlemen's Peace would have done, if not better. Charles agreed to take two millions of crowns instead of Burgundy; Francis, (whose queen had died before the battle of Pavia), was to marry the Emperor's sister Eleanor, and the little princes, after four years of captivity, were to return to their native land. In addition to this, Francis was once more to renounce all claim to Italy, and give up Flanders and Artois to the Emperor.

We can not relate all the moves of the long game played by these two unprincipled men. In a few years Francis again invades Italy to get back Milan; Charles, furious at the breach of faith, and vowing that he will bring the King of France as low as the poorest gentleman in his dominions, marches with an army into

Provence; that beautiful country is laid waste ; the inhabitants die or retreat to the mountains; then on the other hand, famine thins out the ranks of the Spanish soldiers, and Charles gets back into his own country with about half the numbers he started with. At last the Pope offers to mediate between the angry sovereigns, and succeeded so well that Charles makes a visit to Francis, as he crosses France from the Pyrenees to Flanders.

It was during this visit of the Emperor Charles that the court-jester remarked to Francis that he had made a list of all the fools in France, and had written the Emperor's name at the head of it. "And what should you say" inquired the king, "if I should let him get away safely?" "I should rub out his name and put yours in its place," was the reply.

We fancy that Francis felt somewhat tempted, but if so he resisted the temptation, and Charles arrived at his own dominions in safety. As soon as he was fairly out of the country however, the French king was angry with himself for letting all the generosity be on his side, and began making new plans for war. His next step was a strange one for the descendant of St. Louis. He cared so much more for hurting Charles than he did for the Christian religion that he formed a friendship with the Turkish Sultan, and actually sent a fleet to join him in invading Italy. The lilies of France and the crescent of the infidel floated side by side from the mast-heads of their ships, and the pirate Barbarossa carried back with him to Constantinople fourteen thousand Christian slaves, taken in this joint enterprise.

The later years of Francis were disgraced by cruel persecutions of the Protestants. He seemed possessed of that strange idea so common among wicked men in those times, that he could atone for his own sins by burning heretics and subjecting them to the most cruel tortures. He did not repent of his wasteful wars or his falsehoods, for those he thought belonged to his office as a king; but his private life had been as bad as it could be, and the diseases brought on by his own dissipation soured his temper and made him delight in the pain felt by others. The joyous spirits of the youth of twenty had long since gone. At fifty there was left a morose old man, worn out before his time, who sent out his orders to hang and burn human beings with as much indifference as he would have crushed a mosquito, and, unhappily, there were but too many agents ready and glad to execute those orders.

It is pleasant to be able to turn from the gloomy side of this picture to the advancement made at this time in literature and art. Francis was fond of having celebrated men about him, and invited the old Italian painter, Leonardo da Vinci, to live at his court. The sculptor Benvenuto Cellini also spent several years in France, though, if we are to believe his own report, Francis paid him more in promises of patronage than in good gold coin. Men of intellect and learning were welcomed by him, though his own chosen companions were very different people.

The beautiful palaces of Fontainebleau and Saint Germain, beside many smaller chateaux, still bear witness to his taste in architecture and the vast sums he spent upon it. He founded a great institution

called the Royal College, where people could be instructed without cost to themselves; and his general patronage of learning and art gave him the title of "Father of Letters and the Arts." The first half of the sixteenth century is called the *Renaissance*, or new birth of cultivation.

CHAPTER XIX.

HENRY II. FRANCIS II.—1547—1560.



It is sometimes asked: "Why do you make the history of a country only a biography of the lives of its kings?" In writing of France it is difficult to do anything else, for there was scarcely any national life separate from that of the king. Though there might be thousands wiser, better, more able than he, the principle of loyalty in the hearts of the French continued so strong that it is only after many centuries of misgovernment that we find them waking up to the idea that there is one thing in the world better than even a good king, and that is, no king at all, only a just government founded on the people's will.

If the only thing necessary to make a good king were personal courage, and skill in riding on horseback, throwing lances and playing at tennis, Henry the Second would have been an excellent one; but if prudence, good judgment, and a desire for the welfare of his people are required in addition, we must

own that he made a great failure. His father, Francis the First, in dying, had cautioned him especially about three things. He begged of him to lessen the taxes, not to recall the constable Montmorenci, who had been banished, and to beware of the family of Guise, who were already too powerful and too ambitious to be safe subjects for a weak king. So Henry immediately sent for Montmorenci, and almost the first service he employed him in was to punish most cruelly a rebellion against an odious tax which pressed heavily on the people; such was his way of carrying out his father's instructions. The Guise family were soon in high favor, and the foresight of Francis proved to have been in vain.

The tax spoken of was one on salt, called the *gabelle*, first imposed by Philip of Valois. It was always hateful to the French people because it made one of the necessities of life harder for the poor to buy. In these days taxes are, or ought to be, laid mostly upon luxuries, things which poor people can do without, and which the rich can afford to pay for; but that idea had not even been thought of three hundred years ago. A poor man eats as much salt as a rich man, so salt was taxed.

Henry was like his father in being very fond of pleasure, and in choosing to have a set of court favorites about him, which included some very bad women. The most noted of these was one called Diana of Poitiers, who was fully twenty years older than himself, and had been also a favorite of his father's. For her sake he neglected his wife, Catherine de' Medici,*

*De' is a contraction of the Italian *dei*, meaning "of the," the Medici being a renowned Italian family.

who made up for this after his death by taking the government on herself in the reigns of her three sons.

It was not long before Henry was at war with his father's old enemy, Charles the Fifth, who besieged the fortress of Metz, which was gallantly defended by the Duke of Guise. The Emperor had boasted that he meant "to attack the place in such style as to knock it about Mr. Guise's ears," and had sworn never to give up until it was won; but the defence was so obstinate that he broke his oath, and saying in a dismal way that "Fortune, like the rest of her sex, favored the young and slighted the old," went home very much mortified and disgusted.

Not long after this he retired from the world altogether, leaving his country and his quarrels to his son, Philip the Second, who soon had an opportunity of retrieving his father's disgrace at Metz. The battle of St. Quentin, fought by his generals, was a glorious victory for the Spaniards and an equally humiliating defeat for the French, whose commander, Montmorenci, was taken prisoner in the action.

The Duke of Guise was now made Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom, and looking about for something to do, he spied the town of Calais, which had been in the possession of the English for more than two hundred years. Philip of Spain, the husband of the Queen of England, had persuaded her to join him in the war against France, and Calais was therefore a fair point of attack.

This place was of such immense strength that it had taken Edward the Third eleven months of hard work to conquer it; the Duke of Guise retook it in just eight

days! You can imagine the rage of the English, and the despair of Queen Mary, through whose folly the loss had taken place. She declared that when she died the word "Calais" would be found graven on her heart. No wonder the Duke of Guise should have been thought the greatest man in France. The national pride which he had flattered so strongly made him its idol, and the marriage of his niece, Mary, Queen of Scots, to the Dauphin, which took place in the same year, added, if possible, to his power and influence. Nothing of importance was done without consulting him, and his family were advanced to the highest positions of honor.

Philip the Second, finding that he could get no more help from England, decided to make peace, and a treaty was signed at Cateau-Cambresis, which was highly advantageous to him. To cement this peace, a marriage was agreed upon between Philip (Queen Mary of England being dead) and Henry's daughter, Elizabeth; and at the same time that this wedding was celebrated, Henry's sister, Marguerite, was married to the Duke of Savoy, a great general, who had commanded Philip's armies at the battle of St. Quentin. King Henry was extravagantly fond of tournaments, at which he always made a good figure, being very skillful with the lance; so a remarkably splendid one was held on this occasion. The King having run several courses with different knights, who took care to give him the advantage, challenged a Scottish lord in his service, the Count of Montgomery, to run a tilt with him. The Count was extremely unwilling, but the King insisted, and the soldier was obliged to comply.

When they met, riding at full speed toward each other, the Scotchman's lance broke against the king's helmet, and a splinter from it went into his eye. He fell back senseless, for the wood had penetrated to his brain; and after lingering for eleven days in great suffering, but unconscious, he died, little regretted by anyone.

Though we have said nothing about the Reformation during the reign of Henry the Second, it must not be thought that the interest in it was dying out. On the contrary, in spite of the hangings and burnings and persecutions of every sort, the number of Protestants grew day by day, and embraced some of the chief men in the kingdom. The highest in rank among these was Antony de Bourbon, a descendant of St. Louis, who had become king of Navarre by marrying the queen of that country, Jeanne d'Albret, who was a niece of Francis the First. Encouraged by the support of such men, the Reformers became bolder and began to hold their meetings publicly, and to sing psalms as they marched through the streets. When the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis was made, two Cardinals who assisted at it added a secret article promising that the kings of France and Spain should unite in putting down this heresy by every possible means; and as we know what means were possible to such men, we are not surprised to hear that they became hardened in cruelty and taxed their ingenuity to invent things that would cause greater suffering. During the later years of Francis the First, the old fashion of burning at the stake, dreadful as it was, did not satisfy the persecutors. They had an arrangement by which

the people burned were let down into the fire and then drawn up again, burning a little each time, but not enough to destroy life until it had been repeated many times. In the time of Henry his son there was not even the relief of being taken away, but the victims were suspended at some distance above the fire, and there slowly roasted to death for several hours.

Of course it was only the poorer offenders who suffered in this way; the great were beyond the reach of the persecutors; but we should not expect that such a body of people would long go on suffering the helpless ones among them to be tortured and killed on account of their religion. Before long the Protestants became a political as well as a religious party, and France was plunged into all the horrors of a civil war.

Henry the Second left four sons, of whom three, Francis the Second, Charles the Ninth and Henry the Third, became in succession kings of France. There is scarcely anything pleasant to tell about the seventeen months' reign of Francis the Second. At the time of his father's death there were two great parties getting ready to give one another hard knocks when the right time came. These were the Catholics, with the Duke of Guise at their head, and the Protestant Reformers, whose leaders were the King of Navarre and his brother the Prince of Condé. From this time we often hear the Reformers spoken of as Huguenots. The meaning of this word has not come down to us, but it is believed to have come from a German one, meaning, "Bound together by oath."

Francis the Second was a feeble youth of sixteen,

entirely governed by his young wife, the fascinating Mary, Queen of Scots. She in her turn did precisely what her uncles, the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine, told her to do. There was one thing in which all these worthy Roman Catholics agreed, which was that there was nothing in the world so delightful as the destruction of heretics. It seemed as if the sole business of the rulers was to get rid of these dreadful pests as fast as possible, and the more cruelly the better. So, neglecting everything else, they began to persecute. A special court was organized which the people called "the burning chamber," because almost its only business was to condemn heretics to the flames. The young king was made to pass a law ordering that all houses where the Reformed worship was known to take place, should be pulled down. The good work went bravely on—such work as brings tears to our eyes even now, after three hundred years have passed away.

After a while these dreadful deeds began to shock the better class of people, whether they were Protestants or not, and the haughtiness of the Guises disgusted even those who saw nothing wrong in their persecutions. The frightful extravagance of the court-people, who were in the habit of buying everything they wanted but not paying for it, created discontent among tradesmen, and the palace itself was crowded with those who came to beg that the king and queen would pay for the fine things they had ordered and were using.

Royalty could not endure an insult like this, and the Cardinal of Lorraine wrote an order, which he

caused the king to sign, that any one who dared to present a bill or ask for the payment of a debt, should go away or be hanged. To show that he meant what he said, the Cardinal had a very high gallows set up close to the palace of Fontainebleau, where the King was holding his court at that time.

This was too much even for people who were used to tyranny, and some of the creditors who were thus cheated out of their money applied secretly to the Huguenots to help them. A party was formed of the various classes who had causes of complaint, and, as usual in France when things went wrong, there was a loud cry for the States-General—the National Legislature.

“States-General, indeed!” answered the court party. “Do you want to make slaves of us?” Catherine de’ Medici wrote to her son-in-law, Philip of Spain, that “these people wanted to reduce her to the condition of a maid-of-all-work by means of the said States.” So the estates were not assembled, the royal family and the courtiers were relieved from the degrading necessity of paying their debts, and the vulgar tyrants who had desired it were told to go about their business.

Finding that peaceable means did not succeed, some of the discontented formed a plot against the government called the “Conspiracy of Amboise.” This was discovered, and then began the horrible work of punishment. For a month there was nothing heard of but hanging, burning, drowning and torturing. It became a kind of festival for the court, and other amusements were put off that the lords and ladies might enjoy the hideous spectacles. Stakes, gibbets,

and other instruments of suffering, were erected in front of the windows of the banqueting-hall, and after dinner the executions took place while the company crowded the windows and balconies to get a good view. Rows of hooks were fastened high up on the palace wall, and on these the bodies were hung for days together, to be in sight of every one,—to gratify the revenge of the triumphant party and strike terror into the hearts of the defeated.

How long these horrible scenes might have gone on it is difficult to say, but just as the Catholic party had got the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé into their hands, King Francis died quite suddenly, and the Bourbons were spared. The King of Navarre promised not to claim the regency, and Condé, who had been condemned to death, was set free. Catherine, the Queen-Mother, took the occasion of her son's death to have herself appointed regent for his brother, Charles the Ninth, who was only ten years old. She made friends of the Huguenot leaders by giving them something to do in the government, and called the States-General together, allowing them to make some very wise laws, among which was one that no more people should be persecuted for their religion.

It seemed at last as if poor, distracted France was about to enjoy a little peace, but bigotry on one side and fanaticism on the other made this impossible. The Catholic party called the Queen a traitor to her religion, because she wanted the heretics let alone; the Huguenots, as soon as they found themselves free to worship as they pleased, began to interfere with other people's ways of worship, and went about destroying

the images in the churches, knocking down the crosses, and profaning such things as their enemies considered most sacred. When such folly as this was practised, you need not be surprised that the result was a general war.

The first outbreak was at the town of Vassy. The Duke of Guise, with a troop of men-at-arms at his back, halted at this place one Sunday, and, as he passed by a barn, heard a Huguenot congregation there at their devotions. The soldiers attacked the worshippers and tried to disperse them. They defended themselves by throwing stones, one of which hit the Duke on the cheek. At this the soldiers became furious, and fired upon the Huguenots, killing sixty and wounding nearly two hundred more. This is called "The Massacre of Vassy," and was the beginning of a civil war which lasted more than thirty years.

Without going into all the particulars of the long struggle that followed, you should know what became of some of the early leaders in the strife. The King of Navarre, Antony de Bourbon, a weak creature who had been persuaded to go over to the Catholic side, was killed at the siege of Rouen. It is said that before he died he turned once more, and declared himself a Protestant. The Duke of Guise was waylaid and shot while riding about on horseback during the siege of Orleans, and the Prince of Condé, being taken prisoner at the battle of Jarnac, was murdered in cold blood after he had surrendered.

But though the leaders were gone, each left a son to represent him in the contest that was yet to come. These were Henry of Navarre, son of Antony, Henry

of Bourbon, son of the Prince of Condé, who took his father's title, and Henry of Guise, who became Duke upon his father's death. To these may be added Henry of Valois, who was next brother of King Charles the Ninth, and afterward succeeded him on the throne.

CHAPTER XX.

CHARLES IX. HENRY III.—1560–1589.



FOR a time after the events already mentioned, there was a lull in the storm. Charles the Ninth, always inconstant and unsteady, seemed to be turning towards the side of the Huguenots. He permitted them the free exercise of their religion; he sought the friendship of Protestant sovereigns, and encouraged his brother, Henry of Anjou, to pay his addresses to Queen Elizabeth of England. More than this, he offered the hand of his youngest sister, Marguerite, to Henry of Navarre, and showed great favor to the Admiral Coligny, one of the most distinguished Huguenot leaders.

It is difficult to tell at what time the idea of that frightful massacre known as "St. Bartholomew," entered the mind of Catherine de' Medici. Some persons think that she planned it several years before it took place, at an interview with the Duke of Alva, Philip the Second's persecuting general. Others insist that it was a sudden resolve, suggested by her hatred of Admiral Coligny; but all agree that it was her work.

Of all the wicked women history speaks of, none have been more false, more cruel, or more deadly in their hatreds. Any one who stood in the way of her ambition, or had excited her anger, was sure to disappear from the scene, and her revenge was the more deadly because it was always masked under a smile.

A very different woman from Catherine was Jeanne d'Albret, mother of Henry of Navarre. From the time he was born she took the whole charge of his education upon herself, and did her best to make him brave, truthful and patriotic. She was very much afraid that he would be led away by the bad men and women about Charles's court, but when an invitation came for him to marry the beautiful princess Margaret, she consented, thinking that perhaps this might bring about a peace between the Catholics and Protestants. So they went together to Paris, all the bells rang for joy, and great preparations were made for the festivities.

A wedding ought to be a very gay affair, everybody having anything to do with it feeling happy and contented; but the marriage of Henry of Navarre and Marguerite of Valois was not one of that sort. The Catholics were enraged that the King's sister should be given to a heretic; the Protestants dreaded to have their chief entangled with a family so false and treacherous that their caresses were generally the prelude to some deadly mischief. All was anger and confusion.

The Queen of Navarre, who had come to Paris to attend her son's wedding, died suddenly in the midst of the preparations. At the time there was but one explanation — poison! Catherine de' Medici had

presented her with a pair of gloves prepared expressly by the court perfumer, (whom the people called in private "The Queen's Poisoner,") and it was taken for granted that the unseen death was conveyed in them. How much truth there was in this notion we cannot now decide; but it threw a gloom over the Huguenots that not all the gorgeous wedding-finery could drive away.

The marriage took place in front of the great Cathedral of Notre Dame, where a platform was built, and the ceremony was performed in the open air. Nobody had asked Marguerite whether she wanted to be married or not, and it happened she did not, at least to this particular bridegroom; and when she was asked if she would have this man for her wedded husband she made no answer. Her brother, King Charles, who stood by her, noticed this; and as it would never have done to have the performance stop there, he pushed her head down rather roughly with his hand, to make it appear that she nodded assent. Afterward she went into the church to hear mass, while Henry and his friends walked about outside until it was finished.

While everything was going on to make the Huguenots feel perfectly secure, the Queen-Mother was holding dark conferences with her ministers and with her favorite son, Henry of Anjou. He was just as wicked as herself, though much weaker; and she could talk with him about things that poor unsteady Charles was afraid to hear.

Among them all they planned to have every Huguenot in Paris, and as many as possible in the rest of France, killed in one night. The twenty-fourth of August, which is known as St. Bartholomew's day,

was the one selected. It was just six days after the wedding, and the city was still full of Protestants who had come to have their share of the gayety. For some reason not now understood, Catherine could not wait for the general massacre to dispose of the Admiral Coligny, but hired an assassin to shoot him as he was walking along the street. The ball only took off some fingers and lodged in his arm. He quietly pointed out the house from which the shot came, went home and sent for the king. Charles was nearly distracted. His mother had worked upon all his worst passions until he had learned to feel pleasure in what was evil, but he was drawn towards the Admiral by sincere admiration and respect. He did not know what to do. He blustered a little, assured his friend of his love and sympathy, swore to take a terrible revenge for the act—and then went home to be bullied by his mother into signing the order for the massacre of St. Bartholemew.

It was not without a fearful struggle with himself that the weak young man yielded. He would have been glad to get out of it altogether and leave the responsibility to others; but this could not be. His royal hand and seal were needed as a warrant for the deed of shame. When the friends who surrounded him had at last wrung from him an unwilling consent, he became desperate, and exclaimed, "Kill them all! Let not one live to reproach me!"

On the twenty-fourth of August, in the year 1572, the great bell of a church called St. Germain l'Auxerrois rung out at two hours after midnight. All was ready. Every steeple in the capital instantly repeated

the signal; lights streamed out from the windows, and the assassins set forth, armed to the teeth for the attack. They wore white crosses in their hats and a white scarf on the left arm, that they might not by mistake kill each other. They did not mean that one Protestant should be left alive that night in Paris.

The Admiral Coligny was the first to die. The Duke of Guise, to make sure of him, went himself to his house and sent up a servant to murder the old man in his bed. Guise remained in the street until the body was thrown down to him. Then he turned it over with his foot to see if it were really his hated enemy, and, being satisfied, went off to carry on the work elsewhere.

The streets were soon filled with the flying Huguenots, and the whole city became a scene of the wildest excitement. The queen and her attendants watched it from the palace windows; the king, maddened by the sight, stood on a balcony and fired on the wretched fugitives as they ran. He appeared like a madman; it seemed that, like the tiger, having once tasted blood he could not be satisfied. All the Huguenot servants about the court were slaughtered with the rest, except Charles's old nurse and his physician, whom he saved. The King of Navarre and his cousin, the Prince of Condé, in order to save their lives professed to give up their religion. They promised to become Catholics, and, as long as they remained in Paris, attended mass and went through the outward forms of that religion. After many months they succeeded in making their escape, and were then again Protestants as before.

It was not in Paris alone that such scenes were witnessed. All through France an effort was made to make thorough work of the heretics, and immense numbers were killed in the large cities. The most moderate historians estimate the whole number at from twenty-five to thirty thousand.

Charles was now anxious to justify this odious crime in the eyes of the world, so he called his parliament together and proceeded to hold a "bed of justice"* about it. The members were base enough to flatter him with praises of his prompt action against such dangerous enemies; whereupon he sent round messengers with the news to his brother kings and queens. Elizabeth of England was so angry that she would scarcely treat with civility the ambassador who was sent to apologize for the massacre. The princes of Germany, both Protestant and Catholic, shuddered with horror. The Pope, (that wise Gregory the Thirteenth who gave us the calendar by which we still count our days and years,) wept in private over the dreadful story, though he thought it necessary to order a public thanksgiving on the occasion. Nobody really enjoyed hearing of it but the grim Philip the Second of Spain, who considered it one of the greatest blessings ever vouchsafed by Heaven to a sinful world.

Charles the Ninth was not happy. A bloody spectre seemed to pursue him wherever he went. He had wild, disturbed dreams and anxious waking hours.

*This was the ceremony by which the French Kings required the Parliaments to register their edicts, and was so called originally from the circumstance of the King's reclining on a couch while the court was receiving his commands.

He tried by violent exertion to work off the fever that was devouring him, and would ride furiously till he dropped from his horse exhausted, or blow the horn till his lungs were worn out. He had a forge set up for himself and worked at it like a blacksmith; nothing but bodily effort seemed to allay the restlessness of his mind.

As his life drew near its close, the old visions came to him again. He had no rest from the dreadful thoughts that haunted him day and night. His bed-clothes were often found soaked with blood, a natural consequence of hemorrhages from the lungs, but which the ignorant people of that time thought must come either from poison or magic. He died at twenty-four years of age.

Charles left no children, and the throne now passed to his younger brother, Henry, Duke of Anjou, who had been made king of Poland, and was living in that country. Catherine sent for him to return at once, which he did, very much to the disgust of the Poles, who had to look up another king. It was nearly three months, however, before his anxious subjects caught sight of him, so much was he taken up by festivities at the cities he stopped at on the way. When he came, the French people were disappointed to find that he cared nothing about governing, and preferred to pass his time in rowing about on the river in a little painted boat, or playing with a basketful of puppies, which he carried about slung round his neck.

At the battles of Jarnac and Moncontour, where the Huguenots were defeated, he had shown some courage, and the people imagined they had in him a

warlike king like Francis the First; but his bravery had all oozed out, and there was nothing left but a poor creature who thought it fine sport to go to balls dressed like a woman, or sing low songs and play low antics among a set of companions as degraded as himself. He never appeared on horseback, but, when the fancy happened to take him, might be seen walking barefoot through the streets in a dress of sackcloth, together with a company of his chosen companions, all with whips in their hands, with which to lash one another in the churches for their sins. These comrades, whom he called "mignons," or darlings, were the vilest young men who could be found in Paris, distinguished only for their wickedness.

When Henry of Navarre escaped from Paris, which he did about two years after the great massacre, the Huguenots gathered around him and took up arms again. They were so strong that Catherine and the king thought it prudent once more to promise them that they should be allowed perfect freedom of worship. This enraged the Guise party, who thought it would have been better for the king to give up his crown than to make peace with heretics. A powerful party called the League was formed for the purpose of opposing these measures, and soon became the strongest in the kingdom. The fact that the Protestant Henry of Navarre, who was descended from one of the sons of St. Louis, was heir to the throne in case Henry the Third should die without children, added an intense bitterness to the contest, and the Leaguers were determined to fight it out to the end.

The poor, weak King now declared himself head of

the League, thinking that he might in this way gain a little peace, but the intrigues of his enemies left him no rest. Soon after this the battle of Coutras was gained by Henry of Navarre, who showed himself to be not only a brave soldier, but a skillful general and a merciful victor. "Spare my Frenchmen!" he cried to his soldiers when the battle had been won. "No more blood!" And when he found his supper-table set in the room where the dead body of Joyeuse, the Royalist commander, was laid out, he had the supper removed to another room, and checked the noisy gayety of his officers, who were making merry in the presence of death. "Gentlemen," said he, "it seems to me this is a time for grief, even to the conquerors." His own loss, owing to his good generalship, was only about forty men; that of his enemies twenty-five hundred.

And where was Henry the Third all this time? He was not at the battle, being at a distance with another division of his army; and after it we hear of him at the city of Lyons, employed in a way which I will use the words of De Thou, the best historian of that time, to describe.

"As unconcerned as if his kingdom were enjoying perfect peace, he took to collecting little dogs. Everybody was surprised to see the King of France, in the midst of so terrible a war and in extreme want of money, expending upon such pleasures all his time and all the money he could scrape together. * * * Without counting hunting-dogs and birds, which are always a great expense in the households of kings, it cost him every year more than a hundred thousand

gold crowns for these little Lyonnese dogs; and he maintained at his court, with large salaries, a multitude of men and women who had nothing to do but to feed them."

No wonder that the Duchess of Montpensier, sister of the Duke of Guise, carried about a pair of golden scissors at her girdle, boasting that with them she would give Brother Henry a third crown. He had already worn those of France and Poland; she meant that she would shave his head and make him a monk, after the fashion of the old Merovingian times when a king was proved unworthy of his throne.

We next find King Henry back at Paris. The Duke of Guise had been forbidden by him to come to that city, but as the Duke of Guise cared nothing whatever for King Henry's orders, he came nevertheless. The populace were wild with joy, the king angry and helpless. He sent for such of his soldiers as were within reach, and they entered Paris by night, hoping to take the Leaguers by surprise, but the latter were prepared for them. They had barricades, made of paving-stones, carts and barrels, thrown up in the principal streets, and chains drawn across the entrances; the houses were fortified as far as possible, and all the citizens armed. The king's troops were attacked and forced to surrender; the whole town was in a state of the wildest confusion, and Henry at last sent a humble message to the Duke, begging him to put a stop to the fearful carnage that was going on in the streets.

The Duke played his part admirably. He had kept quietly at home, letting others do the fighting and take the blame; now he rode out among the furious mob,

unarmed and with nothing but a riding-whip in his hand, and the tumult ceased at once. The raging multitude were quieted as if by magic; the streets were cleared, and in a few hours all was peace. This is known in history as the Day of the Barricades.

Burning with rage and shame at finding himself thus at the mercy of his own subject, Henry resolved on a cowardly crime that should free him forever from this hated control. He armed nine of his own attendants with daggers with which to take the Duke's life, and stationed them in an ante-chamber leading to his own room. He then sent for Guise to come to him, and as the Duke was raising the *portière* which covered the door, the assassins fell upon him and stabbed him to death. His immense strength enabled him to drag himself across the room even after they had struck him down, and he fell dead at the foot of the king's bed.

Henry came out from a closet where he had been waiting, and after making himself quite sure that there was no life left in the majestic figure, kicked it to have a last revenge. Then he went to his mother's room, full of glee. "I feel much better to-day," he said. "I am King of France again; the king of Paris is dead." "God grant that you may not prove to be king of nothing at all," answered the more prudent Catherine, whom he had not consulted about the murder. "I hope the cutting is right; now for the sewing."

The sewing did not turn out well at all. If Henry hoped by the death of his rival to have a time of quiet in which to enjoy the society of his dogs and his monkeys, he was bitterly mistaken. The Duke had left no son old enough to take up his quarrel, but his brothers

were now all-powerful, and a howl of execration went up from the whole country against the author of this detestable crime. He was excommunicated by the pope, and bands of people went to the churches to pray for his death. Deserted by even his own party, the king asked to see his brother-in-law, Henry of Navarre, and begged for help. Henry joined him very willingly, and they prepared to get together as large an army as they could and to besiege Paris, which was held by Guise's brother, the Duke of Mayenne.

Another strange and unexpected turn of Fortune's wheel was now to come. Three days before the attack on Paris, a young monk named Jacques Clement gained admission to the king by means of a forged letter, and while he was reading it, stabbed him in the body. Henry snatched the dagger from him and struck at him, crying out—"Oh, the wicked monk! He has killed me! Kill him!" and the attendants, rushing in, dispatched Clement with their spears.

The king lived long enough to receive the sacrament, declare that he pardoned his enemies, and call the nobles around his bedside to take the oath of allegiance to Henry of Navarre. The reason for the murder was never found out. As the Duke of Guise was considered a martyr for the Catholic faith and revered as a saint, the monk may have thought he was doing a service well-pleasing to God when he took vengeance on his murderer. On the other hand, many persons suspected the Duchess of Montpensier of suggesting the act, but as nothing could be ascertained, the matter was soon forgotten in others of greater importance.

This, then, was the end of the family of Valois, who for more than two centuries and a half had occupied the throne of France—(1328–1589). An unlucky race they had been, their reigns, for the most part, full of trouble and disappointment. Yet we must own that they left France a much greater and more glorious country than they found it. They extended its territory and made it compact and united, and many of them were enlightened patrons of literature and the arts. Their failings as a race were a too great love of show and magnificence, a heartless grinding down of the poor while they loaded the rich with favors, and a general practice of despotism—that is, ruling according to their own pleasure and by a so-called divine right, without reference to the will of the people.

CHAPTER XXI.

HENRY OF NAVARRE.—1589–1610.



THE third Henry had died without children, Henry of Navarre was now in fact Henry the Fourth of France; but five years of weary fighting were to pass before he could even enter his own capital. His being so distantly related to the late king was against him—he was only a seventeenth cousin or something of that kind—but what was much more against him was the fact of his being a Protestant. A large proportion of the people of France were

still good Catholics, and they could not bear the thought of a heretic king.

Upon Henry's refusal to accept the Catholic faith as his own, his soldiers deserted by thousands. Then he made an agreement with some of the principal Catholics promising to protect their religion, and that offended the Huguenots. Moderation was just what neither party desired, so they began to fight, and Henry won the battles of Arques and Ivry. At the latter he told his soldiers that if their banners went down they must follow the white plume he wore in his hat, and it would lead them on to victory. There was a victory, and a very glorious one, but it produced no great results ; the Leaguers appeared as strong as ever. Henry advanced with his army to besiege Paris. He closed up all the approaches to the city, so that no food could be sent into it except what he chose to allow; the people held out with the greatest fortitude, though nearly starving; and just as it appeared certain that this important place must fall into his hands, Philip the Second of Spain sent his nephew, Alexander Farnese, to its relief, and Henry was obliged to march away.

The King of Spain, the mighty League and the Pope all against him, and only Elizabeth of England on his side, giving him some small help in money and troops—what could Henry do? He did not see any way out of the struggle. So much were both parties set against him that scarcely a sixth part of the people of France were with him. The same causes for which the war was begun would continue to exist to the end, unless some way were found to put a stop to the confusion. To add

to his difficulties, arrangements were made to offer the crown of France to Isabella, daughter of Philip of Spain and niece of Henry the Third, if she would marry a French prince—probably the Duke of Guise. To allow this would have been at once to lay down his crown, and Henry decided to take what he called “the perilous leap.”

He invited some of the most learned doctors of divinity that could be found in France to instruct him as to the Roman Catholic faith, and having listened to their arguments one day from six in the morning until noon, he professed himself completely satisfied of the truth of what they said. The next Sunday he went in great state to St. Denis, where he was received by the archbishop, nine bishops and a great company of other clergymen.

“Who are you?” inquired the archbishop. “The King.” “What do you wish?” “To be received into the bosom of the Roman Catholic church.” “Do you desire it?” “Yes, I desire it.” After this dialogue, Henry knelt before the altar and read the profession of faith which had been agreed upon; the archbishop blessed him and forgave all his sins, and the great roof of the Cathedral echoed with cries of “Long live the King!” For the first time in his life he was a king indeed.

We must not judge Henry too harshly in view of this easy change in his faith. He was probably one of those people who think one form of religion about as good as another if you only live up to it, and had never troubled himself to understand the doctrines on either side. The Calvinists had treated him with great

harshness, and it was perhaps natural for him to think that their severe creed was a mistake. I think we may acquit him of the charge of deliberate hypocrisy, and rather set him down as a man who had very little religion of any kind, but a good deal of patriotism and an intelligent love for his country.

It is hard to describe the character of Henry the Fourth without seeming to exaggerate those good qualities which have made him the idol of the French people from his own day to this. Though he had some great faults, they were not such as made his subjects unhappy. His first thought was always not "What can I do to make myself glorious?" but "What will be best for my people?"

He had led a hard life for many years. Poor, suspected, opposed at every turn, he had never known the pleasures of prosperity. But misfortune could not sour his sunny temper, and trouble made him only the more tender-hearted and sympathetic. One of his favorite sayings was, "I want every man in my kingdom to have a fowl in his pot for Sunday;" which was a generous wish at a time when the poor scarcely ever tasted meat of any kind.

Henry started in life with a large share of common sense and an overpowering energy. Adversity added to these a great power of self-command and an unceasing watchfulness, so that he was always on the lookout for danger, and ready to take advantage of every crumb that Fortune threw in his way. And when he did brilliant things, like gaining the battle of Ivry, his modesty was as remarkable as his patience under misfortune had been. He never took the credit to

himself for anything that was accomplished, or boasted of the great things he meant to do. Just before the battle of Arques, a prisoner was taken who told him of an immense force making ready to attack him. "And where is your army?" asked this gentleman, looking about him at the scanty forces which were all that King Henry had been able to get together. "Oh, you don't see them all," answered the King, laughing. "You don't reckon the good God and the right, but they are always with me."

Another quality very rare in a king who had met with much opposition, was his forgiving temper. He could hardly be persuaded to punish even those who had injured him most seriously. More than once he took such people into his service, treated them with the utmost confidence, and turned them from enemies into devoted friends. When an insurrection broke out, instead of sending a marshal to drown it in blood, he inquired into the grievances complained of, redressed them as far as possible, and by his tact and kindness changed the rebels into enthusiastic supporters.

One more trait should be mentioned before passing on to the incidents of Henry's reign, and that is his perfect sincerity. In the early part of his century an Italian called Machiavelli had written a book to show that the most important thing for kings and queens to learn is hypocrisy. The Machiavellian policy was pursued by Philip the Second, by Catherine de' Medici, and to some extent by Queen Elizabeth; and a monarch who meant what he said and always spoke the truth was for a long time such a puzzle to the rest

of Europe that it baffled them as much as hypocrisy would have done.

There has seldom been a king more out at elbows than was Henry the Fourth at the time of his coronation. We hear vague whispers of mended clothes and patched boots; and it is stated on very good authority that when he received his first ambassadors he had to borrow a velvet coat that had belonged to the dead king Henry to make a respectable appearance in. The Leaguers had melted down the golden crown of Charlemagne, which had been kept as a precious relic for more than eight hundred years, so a new one was made for him, with which he was crowned at Chartres, Rheims being in possession of the enemy. Soon after this the Duke of Mayenne quietly slipped away from Paris, and King Henry entered it amidst the wildest rejoicings. When the garrison of Spanish soldiers marched out of the gates, the king stood by and called out gaily, "Good-bye, gentlemen; my compliments to your master, but don't come here again!"

Henry was very full of fun, and the only punishment he ever inflicted on Mayenne for his five years of stubborn opposition was a good-natured practical joke. The Duke was immensely fat and walked very little, being too unwieldy to do so with comfort. When he visited the king for the first time, the latter asked him to take a turn in the grounds with him. As it would have been the height of ill-breeding to decline such an invitation from his sovereign, Mayenne complied, and Henry kept him walking about as fast as he could for a long time, the poor duke puffing and

panting after him, frightfully red in the face, and ready to drop from exhaustion.

When it was plain that he could endure it no longer, the king burst out laughing, and exclaimed, "There! that's the only punishment you shall have for all the trouble you've given me!" The Duke did his best to get one knee on the ground, which would have been the proper thing to do under the circumstances. He couldn't quite accomplish it, but he assured his majesty of his gratitude and devotion, and was a faithful subject ever after. It was of this Duke that one of the popes said, in great disgust, that he spent more hours at the dinner-table every day than Henry of Navarre did in bed.

In 1598 a treaty was made with Philip II. of Spain, called the Peace of Vervins, which insured tranquility in that quarter; but in the same year a far more important State paper was issued by the king, called the Edict of Nantes. This declared that from that time onward both Huguenots and Catholics should have equal rights in regard to the exercise of their religion, and that the former should not be shut out from any office, honor or dignity on account of their faith. They were to have a court especially to protect their interests, and once in three years they might hold an assembly to talk over their condition, and appeal to the king to redress any grievances under which they still suffered.

Unless we go back to the spirit of that narrow-minded century and see what a new thing it was for those in power to grant religious privileges to others, we shall not understand what a great step was made

in promoting freedom of thought by this act. The Catholic party opposed it bitterly, but, as the king coolly remarked to his Parliament, who hesitated about registering the edict, "My will is reason enough for you; when subjects are loyal, kings need give no other." A fine sentiment if kings were perfect, and which worked very well as long as Henry lived. Afterwards it bore bitter fruits, as we shall see.

All enemies, without and within the kingdom, being at last quiet, Henry had full leisure to give attention to the condition of his country. Unlike Louis the Twelfth, he had no ambition to conquer foreign countries; his one object was the happiness and prosperity of his own people. The year which witnessed the Peace of Vervins and the Edict of Nantes saw France in a state of great misery. In the forty years that had passed since the death of Henry the Second, eight hundred thousand of her inhabitants had been killed and countless homes made desolate, and a vast proportion of those who remained were reduced to beggary.

Agriculture was neglected, the treasury was empty and the nation deeply in debt. The most shameless stealing of the public revenues had been going on for many years, enormous taxes being collected from the people which never found their way into the national purse, but were kept by the officers and great lords who had collected them. Bridges were broken down, great tracts of land laid waste, roads neglected and overspread by marshes. Commerce had nearly died out in the long struggle for existence. All had to be begun over again.

King Henry, one of whose traits was an excellent judgment in choosing his ministers, found in the Duke of Sully the very man to carry out his ideas. This nobleman was at the same time perfectly honest and a great financial genius. He got rid of the middle-men who devoured the hard earnings of the poor without enriching the king, and caused the money to go directly into the royal treasury. He abolished great numbers of useless offices, and forbade the nobles and governors of provinces to raise taxes on their own account (as they had been in the habit of doing), without consent of the King. One nobleman lost sixty thousand francs a year out of his income by this arrangement.

As all the money thus gained was expended with the strictest economy, the effects soon began to show themselves. Roads were made, bridges rebuilt, vast tracts of marshy country drained, manufactures encouraged, and grapevines and mulberry trees planted by millions. Several grand public buildings were begun and others finished or added to at great expense, and yet with all this, the public debt was paid, the taxes gradually diminished, and a large sum left over in the treasury at the king's death.

It was during the years of peace which followed, that some enterprising Frenchmen, under the king's liberal patronage, began to make settlements in America. Jacques Cartier had sailed up the St. Lawrence seventy years before, and various explorers had followed him. In 1605 a settlement was made by Frenchmen at Port Royal, in Nova Scotia; three years afterward the brave Champlain laid the foundation

of Quebec, and later in the century Père Marquette visited the spot on which Chicago now stands.

For a long time the king had been turning over in his mind a plan by which all Christian Europe was to be joined together in a confederacy against the Turks, which confederacy was to be so arranged that no one nation should be more powerful than any of the rest. In order to carry out this "grand design," as it was called, it was necessary first to bring down the pride of Austria and Spain, both of which countries were governed by different branches of the same family. Henry, who had an immense sum of money laid up in his treasury for this very purpose, soon raised a vast army and easily found a pretext for invading the dominions of his Roman Catholic neighbors.

Just as he was about to set out on his expedition, his queen, who had ever since her marriage been clamoring for her own coronation, once more brought forward her request, and urged it so persistently that Henry was, though unwillingly, induced to grant it. The time was inconvenient; he was impatient to start for the seat of war; he did not want to spend the money needed for such a ceremony; he was not very fond of his wife; but he was always weak where women were concerned, and after she had worried him into consenting he had the thing done in the grandest style possible.

The next day he went to pay a visit to the Duke of Sully, who was not very well. He was in low spirits and had repeatedly said that he should be killed before he could get away. He was riding in a coach—a great lumbering vehicle which he always hated—

with six gentlemen of his household and a few outriders, when the procession was stopped by some carts in the street. The king happened to be reading a letter at the time, and was leaning one arm on the shoulder of the person next him. At this moment a man named Francis Ravailiac stepped upon the carriage wheel and plunged a knife twice into the King's breast. After the first blow Henry murmured, "It's nothing," in his old fashion; the second cut an artery, and he never spoke again.

Oh, the mourning that there was in France for the King's death! Sully describes the sobbing and crying, the groans, the mournful silence, the hands clasped and raised to Heaven, that met him as he passed through the streets when the news was told. In the court, measures were hastily taken to preserve order by holding a council and appointing the Queen regent for her young son; and in little more than two hours after the knife of Ravailiac had entered Henry's heart, the new government may be said to have been in operation.

Nobody was able to find out from Ravailiac why he had killed the king. He was put to the most cruel tortures, but denied to the last that anybody had helped him or advised him to do it. It is probable that he was a half-crazy Roman Catholic who did not approve of Henry's mildness towards the Protestants, and thought, like Jacques Clement, that he was doing God service in killing a wicked sovereign. He was put to death with the most horrible cruelty.

Though Henry the Great had, to all appearance, everything that heart could wish, he was an unhappy

man at the time of his death. I have said nothing to you yet about his worst fault. The people he liked best to be with were women of immoral character, for whose society he neglected his wife and his best friends, and who for the last few years of his life exercised an almost unbounded influence over him. The queen, by such means, had lost all affection for him, and is said to have rejoiced at his death; the favorites themselves were jealous, and each disliked the King for his attentions to the others; the courtiers were engaged in undignified squabbles, the natural result of such a state of things; and the king, watched and suspected by all, knew not where to turn for comfort except to his faithful Sully, who never failed him.

This great, wise, foolish King had one pleasure that must have seemed very sweet to him in the midst of the discords around him; he was very fond of his children. One day when the stately ambassador from Germany came to pay him a visit, he found the King on all-fours on the floor, with one of his children on his back. The others were playing about the room. "Are you a father?" inquired Henry, looking up. "Yes, Sire." "Then we will finish our game," answered the King, and finish it they did, very much to the surprise of the dignified minister.

CHAPTER XXII.

LOUIS XIII. 1610—1643.



HE new king, Louis the Thirteenth, was a spoiled child of nine years old, and had a weak, unprincipled mother, who was herself governed by low favorites, the principal of whom were an Italian named Concini and his wife. Sully soon found that his advice went for nothing under the new management, and retired to the country, and then everything slipped back into its old bad way.

"The age of the kings is past," was a saying among the nobles, and they began to tyrannize over the people and tax them for their own benefit just as they had done before. Concini had been made prime minister and afterward marshal. It is remarked by a brilliant modern writer that as long as he continued to share with the nobles the money left in the king's coffers by Sully, they submitted quite tamely to his walking over them; but when the treasury was empty they suddenly discovered that a low-born Italian had no right to rule France, and began to lay plans to destroy him.

The queen-mother was a bigoted Roman Catholic, and the main object of her policy was to keep on friendly terms with Spain. To this end a double marriage was arranged. Her daughter Elizabeth, (which is the same name as the Spanish Isabella), was to marry the son of Philip the Third, and her son Louis was to take for his bride Philip's daughter, Anne of Austria. Again the river Bidassoa, the dividing-line

between France and Spain, was the meeting-place for the representatives of royalty. On the little Isle of Pheasants, in the middle of the river, the young girls met and exchanged greetings. Then Anne went to Bordeaux, in France, where she met her future husband, and Elizabeth to Burgos, in Spain, where she was married to the Prince of Asturias, afterward Philip the Fourth.

When Louis was thirteen years old, he was declared of age to govern for himself. The Queen-mother went through the form of calling the States-General together, but the attempt only showed how useless it was to hope for any thing from such an assembly. When the speaker for the Third Estate, or common people, spoke of the nation as one family of which the lords were the elder brothers and the commons the younger, he was sharply rebuked for his impertinence. "It is a great insolence," said the president of the nobles, "to try to establish any sort of equality between us and them. They are to us as a valet to his master." One of the petitions presented by the nobility was, "that the common people should be forbidden to carry pistols, wear velvet or satin, or own hunting-dogs." In this spirit the States-General separated, not to meet again for one hundred and seventy four years.

The young king, feeble and irresolute but disliking to submit, became daily more impatient of the control of his mother and her favorites. A young friend of his own, Albert De Luynes, persuaded him that Concini and his wife were plotting against his life, and obtained permission to dispose of the Marshal by

assassination. The programme was made between them and carried out by De Luynes, Louis appearing at a palace window as soon as the shot had been fired, and exclaiming joyfully, "Now I am King!"

This cowardly act was quite in keeping with his character. He was a mere puppet, worked by strings which other people pulled. Whoever was the strongest for the moment, pulled the hardest, and the King acted accordingly. When he had shaken off one tyrant it was only to fall into the hands of another. With all this he was obstinate and self-willed, so that his life was a series of struggles to get rid of some influence which irritated him, but which he had not strength to resist. The murder of Concini, instead of giving him the freedom he longed for, only transferred the reins of power to De Luynes, and the king remained as much a cipher as ever until the death of the favorite a few years later gave him a short interval of independence.

After the death of Concini, his wife still remained to be disposed of, and as there was no known crime of which she could be accused, her enemies had her tried for sorcery. When asked by what magical arts she had gained such power over the Queen, she answered proudly, "By the influence which a strong mind exerts over a weak one." She was sentenced to be beheaded, and as she went to her death in the midst of a howling rabble, she said, "What a crowd of people to look at one poor creature!" Her firmness of mind and haughtiness sustained her to the last.

Within ten years after King Henry's death, the great work he did for the peasants had all been undone by

the selfish tyranny of those who should have been their kindest friends. No more fowls in the pot for a Sunday dinner ! If they were raised by the poor man, he must sell them to satisfy the demands of the great noble or the hard-hearted governor, who was again permitted to ride rough-shod over him. There was no more law and order. All had changed to a general scramble for money and offices, and the cleverest and most unscrupulous were sure to come off the best.

And now a name much greater than the king's appears upon the page of history. It is that of Cardinal Richelieu, who for twenty years was the real king of France, governing Louis more absolutely than even his mother had ever done. For many years he had been on the side of the Queen-mother, patiently waiting until the reign of the favorite should be over. Then, skillfully working his way into the king's privy council, he began the work of making over the country according to his own ideas.

As a Roman Catholic, he wanted to get rid of the Huguenots. As a statesman, he desired to crush the power of the great nobles, and forever prevent them from setting themselves up against the king. As a patriot, he determined to humble the pride of Austria and Spain, and keep France up to the pitch of greatness at which she had stood in the time of Henry the Fourth. And with him to will was to do.

In order to injure Spain and strengthen France, Richelieu hastened to arrange a marriage between Prince Charles of England, who had been betrothed to the Infanta of Spain, and Henrietta Maria, the king's sister. As Charles was a Protestant, this seems a strange

action for a son of the Church ; but the Cardinal told the Pope when he protested against some injuries done to Catholics, that although he was a churchman, he was first a Frenchman. The Princess, who was then only fourteen years old, on being asked how she could make up her mind to marry a Protestant, replied quickly, " Why not ? Was not my father one ? "

There had already been trouble among the French Huguenots. Treaties had been made and broken, towns taken and restored, as one party or the other triumphed for the moment, until at last the war came to a crisis in the siege of La Rochelle. This was a beautiful city on the western coast of France, which had been strongly fortified by the Huguenots. The English were on their side in spite of the recent marriage, and sent them supplies by sea; and Cardinal Richelieu, who had the direction of the siege, saw that nothing could be done unless he could fence them in on this side also.

The navy of France was at that time very small, or perhaps he might have blockaded the harbor by placing ships at the mouth of it. As that was out of the question, he decided to build a solid stone wall in the water far enough from the town to be out of reach of cannon. Before this stupendous work, which was called a mole, was finished, the English fleet, which might have broken through it, came and looked at it and then sailed away. After two or three similar disappointments the people of Rochelle made up their minds to stay there and starve, for they were determined never to give up.

With all the horrors of famine staring them in the

face, these heroic men and women kept firm in their purpose. The Mayor, at a town council, laid down his poniard on the table, and said it should stab the first man who spoke of surrender. The poniard looked sharp and dangerous, and every body kept his mouth shut, on that subject at least. The Duchess of Rohan, daughter of the great Sully and wife of one of the proudest nobles in the land, lived, together with her daughter, for three months upon horseflesh. The poor died of hunger by thousands, but the stubborn Mayor still held out. "I am willing to draw lots," said he, "which of us shall be killed to feed the rest. As long as there is one man left to keep the gates shut, it will be enough."

At last, however, the few people who were left refused to suffer any longer, and insisted on sending word that they were ready to surrender, provided that they could march out with drums beating and colors flying, and receive a free pardon for all offences and permission to worship as they chose. The Cardinal was amused at their impudence, but treated the demand rather as a good joke, and let them have their way.

When the deputies came to settle the terms of peace with him they were obliged to ask that horses might be sent for them, as they were too weak to walk. It must have been a spectacle fit to move a heart of stone to see the poor living skeletons creeping along like shadows. The king gave them a dinner and sent provisions into the town; but it is said that many of those who still lived were choked by the first morsel of bread they ate, and died of plenty as those before them had died of hunger.

When the garrison marched out, the conquerors were astonished to see only a hundred and fifty left out of many thousand; the rest had been killed in fighting or had died of want. When the king rode into the city by the side of the Cardinal, a mournful sight met him everywhere. There were dead people in the streets, in the houses, in the churches. No one had strength to bury them, and the decaying corpses filled the air with a horrible odor. It was a curious circumstance that the next day after the king's visit to the city of Rochelle, the great mole which was the cause of its ruin was washed away into the sea by a violent storm. But though set free, as it were, La Rochelle never held up its head again. The fortifications were torn down, the city was forbidden to have a mayor or any government of its own, and the Roman Catholics were restored to all their privileges. To this day Rochelle feels the effect of that fatal siege.

When it was known that the Protestants were still to be allowed to worship in their own way, the Catholics were very indignant, calling Richelieu the "Huguenot Cardinal," or "Protestant Pope," and trying to influence the king against him. But they did not understand the great man who set the power and glory of France above every thing else in the world. He saw that it would be better for the country that the civil war should cease and that the Huguenots, who were still a great body of people, should lay down their arms; and he wanted to save all the strength there was in France for wars against her outside enemies.

Richelieu was not permitted to carry out his plans without bitter opposition from the queen-mother and

her party, and once Louis had actually been persuaded to dismiss him from office. He gave his promise, the disaffected party became wild with joy, and the good news was dispatched all over Europe. The Cardinal was just preparing to go into exile when a messenger came to call him to the king. He remained closeted with him for some time, and came out looking radiant; then unpacked his things and stayed where he was. Mary and her party, crestfallen, sank out of sight. The day on which this happened is called in French history the Day of the Dupes.

After each discovery of a plot against him, and there were many, the Cardinal took a terrible vengeance on the guilty parties, and as these were mostly among the nobility, the headsman's axe was kept busy until scarcely a great lord remained who dared to raise his head above the level of the common people, lest it should be lopped off. The power of the crown, or, as we should say in this country, of the government, was to be all in all. As it was impossible for Richelieu to cut off the head of Mary de' Medici, he induced the cold-hearted king to send her away from court. Instead of burying herself in the obscure country town to which she was ordered to retire, the queen-mother escaped to Brussels, where she could communicate with her friends in Spain. Louis could not forgive this; he never allowed her to return, and the widow of Henry the Fourth, the mother of Louis the Thirteenth, died in poverty in a foreign country.

There was no one left to say No when the Cardinal said Yes. Instead of his being loyal to the king, the question was always whether the king was loyal to

him. He represented the rights, not of the People, but of the Crown. Nothing, not even the king himself, was allowed to stand in the way of this right. It was said that Richelieu had made of Louis the first man in Europe, but the second man in France. We have no room to speak here of his foreign policy, which placed France at the head of all European nations. And for one good deed at least, the people of France had to thank the Cardinal; he put a stop to the barbarous practice of duelling. There was a law against this crime to which nobody paid any attention, but when Richelieu had not only the survivor in a duel but also the seconds executed like common criminals, duelling fell into disuse.

The Cardinal had always been noted for his magnificence, and as he drew near his end it seemed as if he meant to out-do himself in this respect. During his last illness, when it was necessary for him to make a journey to Lyons and back again, he had a good-sized room built and elegantly furnished, in which he might sit, walk about or lie down comfortably. This was carried on the shoulders of eighteen men, and such of his servants as he chose to have for companions rode inside with him. Where the city gates were not wide enough to admit this unusual vehicle, a great piece of wall was torn down, so that he might pass without being disturbed, and ditches were filled up or bridged over for the same purpose.

Paris owes to Richelieu the beautiful "*Jardin des Plantes*," which still adorns it, and some of its great literary institutions. In speaking thus we do not imply any act of personal generosity on his part, for it

must always be remembered that public magnificence under a despotic government is only one among many modes of spending the hard-earned money of the people.

Louis survived the Cardinal only five months. It seemed as if he could not, when alone, bear the burden which had been so long lifted from his shoulders. He died on the anniversary of his father's death, at forty-two years of age. He had no very noticeable faults, and very few virtues. He was brave in battle, but there is no great virtue in that; of moral courage, a much higher quality than physical, he had not a particle. He was cold-hearted and ungrateful, and saw his dearest friends sent to the block or driven into exile by Richelieu without an effort to save them. When the minister himself died, Louis only remarked, "There is a great politician gone," without remembering, apparently, that to this statesman his kingdom owed much of all that it possessed of glory and greatness.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LOUIS XIV.—1643–1715.



FOUR days after the death of Louis the Thirteenth, another Louis was brought before the Parliament to hold a "bed of justice." The little man of four years and a half old was seated in a great chair far too wide for him, and said in a sweet, childish voice, that he had come there to show his good-

will to the Parliament, and that his chancellor would say the rest. It must have looked like a reception by Tom Thumb.

But Master Louis had a pretty clear idea, even then, of the difference between him and other boys. A few days before his father's death, the king asked him if he knew what his name was. "I am Louis the Fourteenth," answered the boy, very innocently. "Not yet, my child, not yet," said his father, stroking his head softly, though we may imagine that he rather enjoyed seeing the spirit of his little son, so ready to take the new dignity upon him. Louis the Thirteenth had been a low-spirited, melancholy man, and this cheerful self-confidence must have been refreshing to him.

He had appointed a council of Regency, not caring to trust his wife with the sole power of government. But the first thing she did was to induce the Parliament to set aside his will and give her the entire control of affairs, taking for her chief adviser Cardinal Mazarin, an adroit Italian priest, who always had a low bow and a submissive smile ready for every one.

There could not have been a greater contrast than between him and the bold, haughty Richelieu; and at first it seemed as if all would go smoothly. Anne was so anxious to please everybody that she promised whatever was asked of her; and a witty courtier said that the whole French language at that time consisted of five words: "The queen is so good!" But as she could not possibly perform all her promises she soon made enemies, and disgraceful quarrels took the place of the general satisfaction.

We shall find it convenient to divide Louis the Fourteenth's long reign of seventy-two years into three periods. The first is that of youth, from his accession to the death of Cardinal Mazarin; the second, when he governed for himself, includes the most glorious part of his reign, during which he profited by the services of the great Colbert, his able and upright prime-minister; the last is a time of misfortune, when he began to persecute Protestants and to lose that splendid place among the kings of Europe which he had held so long.

Five days after the death of Louis the Thirteenth, a great victory was won over the Spaniards at Rocroi in the Netherlands by the Duke of Enghien, afterwards known as the Great Condé. This was the first of a series of battles gained against the House of Austria by this celebrated general, who was helped by another almost as great, named Turenne. In 1648 the peace of Westphalia put an end to the Thirty Years' War in Germany, and gave the French what they had long been looking at with covetous eyes—the river Rhine for their eastern boundary. The provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, which were annexed to France during the reign of Louis the Fourteenth and Louis the Fifteenth, remained in its possession down to our own times, when they again became a part of Germany.

The war with Spain dragged on for some years longer, but a struggle of so much greater importance was going on within France itself that other countries were almost forgotten. This is called the war of the Fronde, and originated in a question of taxes. Richelieu had left the treasury well filled, but Mazarin soon emptied it by his bad management. The expenses

of the Spanish war were enormous, and fresh demands were made on the people. A new tax called the *octroi* was levied upon every article of food or other merchandise brought into Paris from the country, and was so intolerable to the trading community that the Parliament refused to register it. This enraged Anne of Austria, who had been brought up in the despotic court of Spain and did not know what resistance by the people meant. Finding that she could not control public feeling and that the people were everywhere rising in rebellion, she took her two sons, Louis and the Duke of Orleans, and went to St. Germain, where she and her friends lived a forlorn sort of life for some time, while the excitement in Paris continued to increase. The palace was unfurnished, and the courtiers could scarcely find a bundle of straw to lie upon. Queen Henrietta Maria of England and her daughter, (who afterward married the Duke of Orleans), were guests at the palace, and the princess sometimes had to lie in bed during whole days for lack of fire.

Meantime, the civil war changed its character and became a mere party-contest, where both sides forgot the original cause of quarrel, and joined one side or the other from personal reasons. The word *Fronde* means a sling, and the combatants were called *Frondeurs* in derision, because they behaved like boys slinging stones in the streets.

The Prince of Condé, having finished beating the Spaniards, came with his army to Paris to attack the Parliament. The latter, hastily gathering some troops together, were defeated at Charenton by Condé; but after that, most of the fighting was done with very

harmless weapons. The two parties said all the witty things about each other that they could think of, made ridiculous pictures and published a great deal of bad poetry and some abusive pamphlets. If hard names had been bullets, there would scarcely have been a man left alive. A great deal was done, too, with ribbons. The army of Paris looked like a milliner's shop as it marched out in the morning decked in feathers and gay streamers of silk. In the evening it would come back defeated and draggled, to be received by the frivolous crowd with hootings and roars of laughter. The whole thing was turned into a farce.

After a while there was some real bloodshed, and the great generals Condé and Turenne taking opposite sides, there was some rather warm work for a while. An active and somewhat restless young lady called Mademoiselle de Montpensier, a cousin of the king, actually got possession of the great fortress called the Bastille, and turned its guns on Louis when he wanted to enter his capital. At last Condé, in a fit of disgust at the conduct of the queen, left his country and passed into the service of Spain; Anne and her son returned to Paris, the questions in dispute were allowed quietly to drop, and the War of the Fronde came to an end, after an inglorious struggle of five years.

As usual, the poor were the greatest sufferers. The young noble who put himself at the head of a troop of horse and dashed over the country after the enemy, did not care whose cornfields and gardens he trampled down, nor how many families were ruined by the pillage of his soldiers. If he saw a whole village on

fire at once, it was a pleasant sight to him, provided the village belonged to the opposite party; and if it did not, his regret was not that the poor wretches had been driven starving from their homes, but that the enemy had gained an advantage over himself.

Not far from Paris there was a convent for nuns called Port Royal, and the good abbess wrote to a friend: "We are all busy making soups for the poor. Everything is pillaged. Cornfields are trampled down by the cavalry before the owners' eyes. Nobody will plough or dig, for he is not certain of reaping what he sows; all is stolen. We have concealed as many peasants and cattle as we can in our own house. The dormitory and chapter-house are full of horses. We are almost stifled by being shut up with these beasts, but we could not resist the cries of the poor. Forty cows are hidden in the cellar. We have torn up our linen clothes to make bandages for the wounded. Our firewood is used up, and we dare not send into the woods for more, for they are full of marauding soldiers."

And this was only in one little district. If we multiply it by thousands, we shall then have only a faint idea of the miseries of industrious France. But it did not long disturb the enjoyments of idle France, and the court was soon as gay as ever.

At thirteen the young king had been declared able to govern for himself; at twenty-one, it was high time for him to take a wife. Philip the Fourth of Spain had a daughter who would suit him admirably, and both countries were tired of the war, which had been going on all this time. With Condé on one side and Turenne on the other, the victories and defeats were

about equal, and it seemed as if there would be no end to it. But just here a difficulty arose. The king of Spain would make no peace unless Condé could be restored to all his honors and dignities. Mazarin naturally refused to reward in that way a traitor to his country; and it was not until Philip threatened that he would give Flanders to the Prince as an independent possession that the Cardinal gave up the point. The Prince was pardoned, and made governor of Burgundy.

Some time before this, Condé had captured a town from the French, and, as an act of courtesy, had sent back to Louis some standards taken from his troops. "The Spaniards are so little used to taking French colors that I will not deprive them of these," answered the king, disdainfully, and sent the flags back again. After the peace, Condé knelt at the feet of Louis to ask his pardon, to which the monarch answered, "Cousin, after the great services you have rendered to the Crown, I do not wish to remember any action that has done harm only to yourself." I think we may say that Louis, at this time, at least, was "every inch a king."

All things being settled, the little Isle of Pheasants in the river Bidassoa again saw a splendid company assembled on its shores. A grand pavilion was built in the middle of the island, and a chalk-mark was run through the center of the floor, to show the exact place where Spain ended and France began. Across this mark the two kings exchanged a solemn embrace, and Anne of Austria met her brother, Philip the Fourth, after a forty-five years' separation.

Louis was very much pleased with his bride, whose name was Maria Theresa. He treated her far from well, and yet, after twenty-three years of married life, he declared that her death was the first regret she had ever caused him. In the marriage-contract it was provided that the bride should give up all right to the throne of Spain, for herself and her descendants. This agreement should be remembered, as events of great importance turned upon it afterwards.

It was Cardinal Mazarin who had brought about this delicate and difficult Peace of the Pyrenees, and whose name was in every mouth. But the Cardinal was soon to be beyond the reach of earthly praise or glory. Very slowly and regretfully he gave up his hold on life. One of his attendants heard him, while walking about among his vast treasures of art and wealth, say: "And must I leave all this behind? What trouble I have taken to collect these things, and now I shall never see them again." He had been a bad home-ruler for France,—wasteful, grasping and indolent, but he probably did not suspect the harm he had done. His greatest failing was an inordinate love of money. He made use of his position to enrich himself to such an extent that at his death he left property, gained by very discreditable means, which would equal forty millions of our dollars. On the other hand, he established (probably with the people's money), the French Academy of Painting and Sculpture, the magnificent Mazarine library, and the College of Four Nations, an institution for the education of children from four countries which had been added to France by the treaty of Westphalia.

When the Cardinal was dead, the first person who came to Louis on business asked to whom he should address himself. "To me," replied the king.

A capacity for hard work was what distinguished Louis the Fourteenth from most other kings. He began with the determination to understand his own business thoroughly, and to be certain, from his own knowledge, that it was done properly. He spent regularly eight hours a day in his cabinet at the public business. Ministers, chancellors, and all officers of the State were charged to get their instructions directly from himself, and to do nothing without his orders. All this was part of a system of despotism which was very much against the true interests of the nation; but this must not blind our eyes to the example he set of industry and regularity.

Mazarin said of Louis, "There is enough in him to make four kings and one honest man." This shows that the Cardinal had not a very high opinion of kings, and thought an honest man rather a rare product of nature; perhaps it was so in his time. Certainly his own hoarded millions made a shameful contrast to the emptiness of the royal treasury. It was time that someone should take hold, and Louis soon found out both the right man to dismiss and the right man to put in his place.

Mazarin, when on his death-bed, had said to the king, "Manage your affairs yourself, Sire, and raise no more ministers to the height at which your goodness has placed me. I see by what I might have done how dangerous it is for a king to give his servants such power." He himself had employed Nicholas Fouquet

as Superintendent of Finance, an office corresponding to our Secretary of the Treasury. This man, a person of brilliant talents and great taste for literature and art, was shamefully dishonest. Mazarin knew it, everybody knew it; and yet Fouquet went on stealing the public money, falsifying the accounts, and spending most wastefully what he did not take for himself, and still he kept his office.

He was so used to offering bribes to everybody that he even tried to bribe the king. He sold the rich office of Attorney-General, which he held in addition to the other, for fourteen hundred thousand livres, and gave a million of them to Louis, who was in pressing need of money, no doubt thinking that he had bound His Majesty to him for ever.

There was a proverb among the old heathen, "Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad," and it seemed to be true in this case. Fouquet had built himself a magnificent palace which was filled with costly works of art and surrounded by the most exquisite gardens; and he had the imprudence to invite the King here to an entertainment more splendid than any which that monarch had ever offered to his own guests. As Louis saw the tables loaded with silver and gold dishes, and the noble company pouring their compliments into the ear of the smiling and self-satisfied host, he could scarcely refrain from having him given up to justice on the spot.

Anne of Austria advised him against this, saying, "Such an action would not be honorable to you, my son, when the poor man is ruining himself, to give you an entertainment." He was ruining himself, indeed,

but not in the way the queen-mother meant. He was arrested soon afterward and kept in prison for three years while his trial went on. Then he was sentenced to banishment and confiscation of all his property; but the King, thinking this too mild a punishment, had him imprisoned for life in the gloomy fortress of Pignerol.

This unnecessary harshness gives the key-note to Louis's whole life. No punishment could be too severe for any one who had offended him. No sense of justice whispered to him that since he had deliberately neglected for years to look into a matter which he knew must be wrong, it would be enough to take away the offender's property and send him away forever from his country as the regular court of justice had decided should be done. The king meant to show that he was master.

His favorite saying was, "*l'Etat, c'est moi*;" "I am the State." With this idea he began his life, and in this spirit he carried it out to the end. At seventeen years of age he went, booted and spurred and with a riding-whip in his hand, into the room where his Parliament was engaged in debating on certain taxes, and ordered them to mind their own business, which was to register his edicts, not to discuss them. His imperious will gained the victory, then and always, where his own people were concerned, and no king was ever more slavishly obeyed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TO THE PEACE OF NIMEGUEN—1678.



LOUQUET'S place was filled by a very different person, whom historians have agreed to call the great Colbert. He found the public money in the same condition it had been in before Sully's time. Only about one-third of the taxes paid ever reached the royal treasury, while the expenses of collection amounted to two-thirds of what was assessed. The result was an enormous debt and dreadful suffering among the poor, who were almost the only ones to be taxed.

It is hard for us to believe in this day that the nobility and clergy, with their immense incomes, paid scarcely any taxes at all. We do not wonder that the working classes at last arose against such a state of things as this, but rather that they ever bore it at all. One letter written to Colbert at this time says, "the poor are eating grass and roots in our meadows like cattle. Those who can find dead carcases devour them, and unless God takes pity upon them they will soon be eating one another." Another says: "We have had to throw open the doors of our great hospital, having no longer any food to give to those who are in it. I can assure you, there are persons in this town who have gone for whole days without anything to eat."

These people were so wasted with hunger that they had no strength to cultivate the ground, and their cattle had already been seized by the government for

taxes. The large mind of Colbert saw at once what a false principle regulated these things, and, while advising the king to excuse the people from paying their arrears, he labored to introduce a system which in later times has become universal; that of taxing houses and lands, incomes and luxuries, instead of the blood and bones of the laborer. He did not entirely succeed, but he did much to relieve the burdens which the people were groaning under, and by his management nine-tenths of what was collected went directly into the government chest, leaving a large sum there for extra expenses.

These expenses began only too soon. Though Louis allowed some years to go by without attacking his neighbors, he had none the less a passion for war whenever it could be made the means of increasing his own glory. It is impossible to give the details of his many wars. The slightest possible mention of them will suffice.

(At the death of his father-in-law, Philip the Fourth, he claimed Flanders and the Franche Comté, which had once been part of Burgundy, as belonging to his wife, who was an older sister of the new king of Spain, Charles the Second. When reminded that he had given up all claim to any such inheritance when he married, he replied that the contract was good for nothing because the queen's dowry had never been paid.

Condé and Turenne soon conquered these provinces, assisted by the great military engineer, Vauban, and accompanied by Louis and many of the young nobility. Peace was made with Spain, but it would not naturally

be agreeable to other nations to see the king of one gradually swallowing up the countries in his neighborhood, for no one could tell whose turn would come next. So England, Holland and Sweden made what was called the Triple Alliance, by which they bound themselves to stand by one another against Louis, and protect the weaker nations who were in danger from his ambition.

It happened that just at that time Charles the Second, a very mean and greedy king, was on the throne of England. He hated liberty in his secret heart quite as much as Louis did, and had only joined the Dutch Republic, Holland, by the persuasion of his ministers, who cared much more for the interest of England than he did. Louis took advantage of his necessities to send the Duchess of Orleans (Charles's sister and his own sister-in-law), on a secret mission to him to persuade him to break off from the Triple Alliance. The pretty Henrietta accomplished this without difficulty, and Charles accepted a yearly pension from Louis, which was paid to him secretly as long as he lived.

Louis had from the beginning meant to make war on Holland as soon as he could get England to break off her friendship with the Dutch. He could not forgive this humble republic, which less than sixty years before had freed itself from Spain, for presuming to join an alliance against him, and he longed to punish it. He invaded the country with a splendid army, nominally commanded by himself, but really under the direction of Condé and Turenne, with all the most skillful captains in France in their train.

Everything they did was reported to Paris with the wildest enthusiasm, as if Alexander the Great and Julius Cæsar had been rolled into one to make the still greater Louis. The army took many towns and seemed likely to conquer all Holland, when, by a change in the government, William, Prince of Orange, the nephew of Charles the Second of England, was placed in command of the defence. Holland was poor enough in men and money, but she had one ally that Louis had not counted on—the ocean; and when her fortunes seemed nearly desperate, William of Orange ordered the dykes which kept out the sea to be cut through; the country was flooded, the French were forced to retire, and Holland was saved. We are tempted to wish that every invasion might end in defeat.

A war with Germany came next after this, during which Turenne committed the most cruel deeds in the Palatinate. The horrible ravages made by his troops—the burning of towns, the murder of unarmed citizens, men, women and children, the destruction of the entire harvest—all these make a picture of blood and desolation which must darken his name forever. He was not opposing an army; no resistance was made; it was the wantonness of revenge.

The war continued with great fury until the death of Turenne, who was replaced by the great Condé. This general was then very old, and had retired from military life; he served during only one campaign, and his eventful life came to a close in peace. A great deal more fighting was done, which it would be unprofitable to relate in detail, so I shall pass on to the Peace

of Nimeguen, in 1678, which put an end to the war for a short time. By this treaty Spain gave up the whole of the Franche-Comté and many strong towns on the border of Flanders. The Empire of Germany and Holland got off more easily, but France remained without a question the first state in Europe in power and importance. The delighted magistrates of Paris solemnly voted to Louis the Fourteenth the title of "The Great," and built the two grand triumphal arches of St. Denis and St. Martin in honor of his victories.

The change that had come over the fortunes of the country since the death of Mazarin must have seemed at first almost like magic. Not only was the revenue increased without unbearable taxes, but new enterprises sprang up in every quarter. The great canal of Languedoc was made, uniting the waters of the Bay of Biscay with those of the Mediterranean; trading companies were established with the East Indies and other countries, which poured money into the pockets of French merchants, and workmen were brought from all over the world to teach the French how to manufacture many articles for which they had previously sent elsewhere.

Gobelin tapestry, the finest plate glass, the richest dress-materials, the most superb carpets, were made in such quantities that the French began to export them. It was forbidden to bring lace into France from foreign lands, and as enormous quantities of this expensive fabric were worn by the courtiers, thousands of French women and children were soon busily employed in its manufacture. Admirable roads were made from one

end of the kingdom to the other; a great navy filled the ports and drove away the pirates from the Mediterranean; several palaces already begun were finished under Colbert's administration. The Louvre, St. Germain, and other splendid buildings still bear witness to his energy and good taste.

But there came a time when even Colbert's wise economy failed to provide for the king's willful extravagance or for the money he squandered in useless wars. Having at all times a great dread of death, Louis took a dislike to his palace of St. Germain, because from it he could see the towers of St. Denis, the cathedral where he must one day sleep with his fathers; and he chose to build another at Versailles, where he could be shut in from all annoying sights.

On this vast and totally unnecessary pile of buildings he expended a sum which would be equal in our time to nearly two hundred millions of dollars. The pleasure-grounds which surrounded it were sixty miles in circumference, and whole groves were transplanted to fill this vast space. Water was brought at first from the distant Seine, and afterwards a river ninety miles away was turned from its bed and made to minister to the caprice of the "Grand Monarque." The painting and sculpture lavished on this place would have filled twenty palaces. But the taxation for this and similar purposes became enormous, and Colbert dared to remonstrate, not only against this extravagance, but against the monstrous expenditures of the court.

"A useless banquet at a cost of a thousand crowns causes me incredible pain," he wrote to the king.

"Your majesty must pardon me, but it seems to me as if you were beginning to prefer your pleasures to every thing else. At the very time when your majesty told me that the morsel of bread must be taken from the people's mouth to provide for the navy, you spent two hundred thousand livres for a trip to Versailles." Plain speaking, this, and such as few men dared to address to the great monarch. It was not at all to Louis's taste, and although he did not openly quarrel with Colbert, whose services were important to him, he treated him with harshness and neglect, and constantly blamed him for spending too much money.

When the great minister lay on his death-bed, Louis wrote him a kind letter, an honor which many of his subjects would have been almost willing to die in order to receive; but Colbert would not open it, supposing it to be only the usual sneering fault-finding. "I don't want to hear anything more about him," he said. "Now at any rate he might leave me alone." Colbert left a large fortune, honestly gained, but the ignorant and brutal populace, remembering Mazarin and Fouquet, cursed his memory, and it was necessary to bury his remains secretly by night, to save them from the fury of the mob.

It must have been a curious spectacle to see the fawning courtiers hovering about Louis the Great, all anxious for a smile or even a look from his awful face, each one trembling at the thought of his frown. They had but one thought among them: "The King! the King!" They seem to have had nothing better to do from morning to night than to watch his looks and motions, and listen for the words

that he deigned to let fall from his august lips. Every peculiarity in his walk or manner was instantly mimicked by the noble crowd. Being short of stature, he wore shoes with heels four inches high, so as to look more imposing, and added a top-story to his head in the shape of an enormous wig, covered with stiff curls. Of course every man about the court also wore high heels and a curly wig, and the consequence is that all their portraits look alike.

Louis had extremely gracious manners when he chose to be agreeable, therefore gracious manners became the fashion, and vast importance was attached to them; but they covered a great deal of wickedness. It was generally understood that it was of no importance what kind of life a man led, provided he was in favor with the king. Louis himself set an example of unblushing vice in his private life, neglecting his queen and putting in her place other women who were received at court as if they had been the best-behaved ladies in the land, while the excellent Maria Theresa was scarcely heard of.

He loved to gather men of literary talent about him, not because he loved books himself, for he was so ignorant he could scarcely read or write, but because he had sense enough to know that their presence gave additional dignity to his court. He knew nothing of the history either of his own or of any other nation, and therefore lacked entirely the knowledge of life and the power of comparing himself with others which even a limited course of study would have given him. He honestly thought himself the greatest man in the

world, and this conceit often made him ridiculous in the eyes of foreigners, though to his own countrymen he appeared little less than godlike.

He got what he wanted, and that was incessant flattery and servility. His active mind showed itself in regulating every thing that was done at the court down to the most trifling particulars. The person who was allowed to hold a candle while he undressed himself was made proud for the rest of his life. The happy man whose duty it was to pass in his wig behind the bed-curtains at the end of a long cane, so that he might put it on before any human eye looked at him in the morning, was the envy of the less favored courtiers. The permission to wear a certain kind of short jacket like one worn by the king, was a grace to go down on one's knees for.

Louis also made a complete list of those who might sit in his presence, who might stand and who might kneel. It was the greatest of all privileges to be admitted to his dressing-room and have the honor of seeing his clothes put on or taken off. And the strange thing about it all is that this admiration was real and not pretended. The king might be acting a part, but the courtiers were not. Even the preachers fell into the same poor way, and instead of hearing reproofs for his vices when he condescended to listen to their sermons, he heard nothing but smooth sentences about religion in general, mixed with a good many references to the earthly monarch who favored the house of God with his presence. A funeral oration on some distinguished man or woman could scarcely be concluded without some compliment to the living king.

Louis has been much praised for his liberality. Here is a specimen of it. When he built the chateau of Marly, (which cost some eight or ten millions of dollars,) he gave a grand entertainment at its opening. Each lady found in her dressing-room a complete set of clothing of the most magnificent description, including jewels; each guest was at liberty to give entertainments in his "apartment,"—(which does not mean in French a single room, but an entire suite),—where repasts were served with the same elegance as at the king's own table; servants, horses and carriages waited the bidding of the guests, and every thing was done to make an earthly Paradise. Very liberal, indeed: and who paid for all this? The king, of course. But where did the king get the money for the splendid entertainments of which this is only one of many—for the vast chateaux, the exquisite works of art, the costly service? It was ground out of the bodies of the poor. The palmy days of Colbert's early ministry were over. The prosperous merchant could still count his gains with pleasure, for it was not upon the rich that the burden fell; but the hard-working artisan and the toiling peasant groaned under taxes which, as Colbert said, took the very bread out of their mouths. Remember, when you read of such "liberality," who it is that pays for it.


Another instance given of the king's generosity is that when the daughters of his ministers were married, he gave to each one a portion of two hundred thousand crowns. And all the court said, "Oh, what a generous king!" And the poor man said, "I can not plough

my land this year; I must dig it up as well as I can with my hands. My cattle were all taken for taxes."

In our own republican country we complain sometimes of heavy taxes, but this is because we forget the sufferings of the generations that are past. There are two reasons why our taxes are easily borne—the first is that they are as thistle-down to hailstones compared with those we have been describing; the second is that we impose them on ourselves by our own votes, and expend them by our own officers, an idea which had not dawned in France in the seventeenth century.

CHAPTER XXV.

TO THE DEATH OF LOUIS XIV.—1715.

HE first thing Louis did after the peace of Nimeguen was to seize various fortified towns belonging to his neighbors, sometimes under the pretence that they had once belonged to France, sometimes without any pretence at all. One town he took because he said it had been forgotten when the treaty was made. His habit of keeping up warlike operations in a time of perfect peace grew to be so much a matter of course that nobody was surprised at it, though all resented it. Various nations in Europe were planning to attack him by joining their forces in a grand coalition, but before this could be completed an event took place in France itself which fell upon

the continent like a thunder-clap. This was the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, a decree that had been issued by Henry the Fourth to give Protestants the right of worshipping God in their own way, which in those days was considered a great privilege. Through the long reign of his son it had never been disturbed, even by the Roman Catholic Richelieu, except where it had led to rebellion; and when that was over it remained in force as before. But for several years in France it had been infringed upon little by little, until at last Louis was induced by his friend Madame de Maintenon to take it away altogether.

This lady was in many respects an admirable woman, very different from the court-favorites who came before her. She had a fine intellect, charming manners, and no doubt sincerely desired to use her influence over the king only for his good; but in matters of religion she was bigoted and narrow-minded, and had no trouble in persuading Louis that the best atonement he could make for his many sins would be to persecute those who did not believe in what she called the true faith. Another person who had great power over the king's mind at this time was his minister of war, Louvois, who had succeeded Colbert in his confidence. Louvois was constantly urging him to undertake new enterprises, and had a savage, impatient disposition, to which the rooting out of heretics was a positive pleasure. It was not that he cared for religion, but he loved fighting for its own sake, and was never contented unless he could keep Louis occupied with some kind of warfare.

The king began his operations by what were considered mild measures. The Huguenots were preached at and talked to, and when this failed, bribes were offered to them. Those who were willing to change their religion were excused from having soldiers billeted upon them, while those who continued firm had an extra number. Children were allowed at seven years old to say which form of worship they chose, and if they said "The Mass," they could be taken away from their parents and brought up by the priest.

All this, however, made but little impression on the great mass of the Protestants, who were quite as much attached to their faith as Madame de Maintenon was to hers. Some of them escaped from France into Protestant countries, which brought an order from the king that all who were detected in trying to quit the country should be sent to the galleys. If they offered to sell their property before going away, it was to be confiscated. They were forbidden to hold meetings for religious worship. One order of the King runs thus: "All women not noble found at such assemblies shall be whipped, and branded with the fleur-de-lis." Oh, chivalrous king, who was so polite to women that he never received a curtsy from even a chambermaid without taking off his hat to her!

After this came the *dragonnades*. It was an idea of Louvois's. Squadrons of dragoons were sent into the heretical districts and there quartered on the inhabitants, with orders to torment them in every possible manner short of injury to life or limb. Within this limit they had full power. Every brutal outrage that

could be devised was perpetrated on the wretched inhabitants by these irresponsible ruffians.

All this at length produced its effect. The spirit of the people was broken, and many thousands of them became Roman Catholics, or at least professed themselves so. "Not a post arrives," wrote Madame de Maintenon, "without bringing the king tidings which fill him with joy; the conversions take place by thousands." In the midst of all this the formal decree of revocation of the Edict of Nantes was signed in the year 1685, eighty-seven years after Henry the Fourth had granted it.

Not content with this, Louis added other articles. All Huguenot places of worship were to be leveled with the ground; the pastors were to quit the kingdom within a fortnight; their congregations were not allowed to follow them, and the children must be baptized by Roman Catholic priests and brought up in "the Church."

Notwithstanding the severity of this decree, many of the Huguenots refused to obey it, and unspeakable cruelties were practised upon them. The pastors, such as chose to stay with their people, were hanged, burned, or broken alive upon the wheel—a horrible punishment, until then reserved for the basest of criminals. The king probably knew very few of these particulars; he was fully occupied in hearing his praises sung by preachers and poets who were comparing him to the Emperor Constantine and to Charlemagne, both upholders of Christianity.

In spite of the decree forbidding it, the Huguenots contrived to get away by thousands. Through Holland

in the north and Switzerland in the south, such as could not gain the sea emigrated and joined their friends in England and Germany. It is estimated that between two and three hundred thousand of the most industrious class in France left their country in the fifteen years that remained before the close of the century. But they carried their arts and their skill with them, and the loss of France was her neighbors' gain.

In the meantime the countries which Louis had so wantonly injured after the peace of Nimeguen had been gathering up their strength, and formed what they called the "Grand Alliance" against him. He did not wait for the attack, but sent his armies into Germany and conquered the district called the Palatinate. Being obliged afterward to abandon this, he ordered it, by the advice of Louvois, to be laid waste, to prevent its being occupied by the enemy. The unhappy inhabitants found the horrors which had befallen them under Turenne far exceeded. Vineyards were destroyed, orchards cut down, houses burned; even the graveyards were invaded and the bones of the dead scattered over the plain. The magnificent palace of the Elector at Heidelberg was blown up. One hundred thousand people, driven from their homes, wandered over the country calling down the vengeance of Heaven on the cruelty of their oppressors.

At about the same time James the Second was driven from the throne of England by an outraged people who could endure his tyranny no longer, and Louis sent him men and money, and fought two battles

in his behalf—one by land in Ireland called the Battle of the Boyne, and one at sea off Cape La Hogue, in Normandy. Both were unsuccessful; William of Orange was raised to the vacant throne, and James, hospitably received by Louis, spent the rest of his life at St. Germain, discontented and ungrateful.

The war against the Grand Alliance was closed in 1697 by the Peace of Ryswick, at which Louis was forced to give back many of his conquests, to acknowledge William of Orange as king of England, and even to destroy the fortifications of Strasburg and other places on which he had spent enormous sums of money. So the closing years of the seventeenth century found France once more at peace.

But what a peace ! It was the quiet of utter exhaustion. It is said “the people were perishing to the sound of *Te Deums*.” Their usual food was rye porridge, though the best paid laborers, who earned about eight cents a day, could sometimes buy a little refuse meat from the butchers’ shops. But, rich or poor, they must furnish three meals of meat a day to the soldiers billeted upon them. The monstrous extravagance of the king and the court had somewhat abated, however, and life at the palace was pronounced very dull by those who remembered the splendors of Marly and the entertainments at Versailles. At the time of the Peace of Ryswick, Louis was already making plans which led to a new war more destructive than the last.

This was called the war of the Spanish succession. Charles the Second of Spain having died without children, the throne was claimed by those of his two

sisters, one of whom had married Louis the Fourteenth and the other one the Emperor of Germany.

Maria Theresa had solemnly renounced at her marriage with Louis all right to the crown of Spain for herself and her descendants, but the old question of the unpaid dowry came up, and Louis determined to claim the country for his grandson, the second son of the Dauphin. The young prince was duly equipped and sent off to Spain to reign there as Philip the Fifth, Louis saying as he embraced him at parting, "Go, my child ! there are no longer any Pyrenees !"

He meant that France and Spain would from that time be like only one kingdom, but he ought to have remembered that though he willed that there should be no Pyrenees, there was still an England, a Holland and a Germany, that might object to the breaking down of the partition-wall between the two countries.

The Emperor of Germany of course resisted this claim, thinking that his own son had the best right to it, and while he was preparing to go to war with Louis, the latter very foolishly united all Protestant Europe against him by acknowledging the right of James Stuart, (the son of James the Second of England, who had just died), to the throne of England. This brought England into the quarrel, and though Louis might have coped with Germany alone, the two together were irresistible.

The two greatest generals of the age commanded the armies of the enemies of France; the Duke of Marlborough that of England, Prince Eugene of Savoy that of Germany. In the course of five years they routed the French at Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde

and Malplaquet, besides gaining lesser victories. The French soldiers fought with the utmost bravery; but in spite of this, the Emperor's son was proclaimed in Spain under the title of Charles the Third, and Philip was obliged to fly from his capital.

Well might the old king write to him: "If you thought it was going to be an easy or pleasant thing to be a king, you were very much mistaken!"

Nature seemed to be against Louis as well as man. The winter of 1708-9 was so frightfully cold that even the rushing waters of the Rhone were frozen over, and the olive-trees perished in the ground. The peasantry died by thousands of cold and hunger. The whole year was one of fearful famine. The grain sown did not germinate, but withered in the ground, and the fruit-trees remained leafless. The king sent his silver and gold table-dishes to be coined into money to buy food for the poor, and many of the nobles followed his example, but what was gained did not go far. Madame de Maintenon set the example to the court of eating bread made of oatmeal instead of wheat, because it cost less, and sincere efforts were made to relieve the general distress. But it was all like a drop in the bucket so long as a costly war was going on; and at length the king brought his proud mind to beg for peace.

By this time the allies had become so haughty in their demands that they rejected all reasonable proposals, and insisted on such as Louis felt compelled to refuse. Among other things they required that he should himself drive his grandson from the throne of Spain, by force of arms if necessary. "No," said he,

“if I must fight let it be against my enemies, and not against my own flesh and blood.” He made an appeal to the people of France asking for their help, and an enthusiastic reply came from all classes urging him to refuse the insulting proposition.

Fortune now began to take a turn in his favor. His generals gained some brilliant victories, and drove the Emperor's son out of Spain. The English quarreled among themselves at home, and recalled their greatest general, Marlborough, on account of his politics. Finally the long wished-for peace was signed at Utrecht in 1713, and ended the war of the Spanish Succession—a desolating struggle between rival kings, to decide which of them should impose a ruler over a foreign people who were never asked to make their own choice. As if kings were drovers and their subjects cattle! Louis had nothing to show for this dreadful war of twelve years but an empty purse, an enormous public debt, and the miserable satisfaction of having succeeded in establishing his grandson in Madrid, while the Pyrenees were still as high and rugged as ever.

His last years were very sad. One after another his family were borne to the grave, so that before his turn came he was left almost alone. When he was seventy-three years old his only lawful son, the Grand-Dauphin, died suddenly of small-pox. He was a man of no great mark, but his oldest son, becoming Dauphin in his turn, promised the French a better king than they had had since Henry the Fourth. This was the Duke of Burgundy, whose character seems to have been a union of all the virtues. His instructor was the celebra-

ted Fénelon, who wrote for him the story of *Télémaque*, so well known to the school children of a few years ago. His wife was the lovely Adelaide of Savoy, whose charming manners, kind heart and unvarying good temper and sprightliness had made her the idol of the palace and the delight of the old king.

When she went out at night to balls or other court festivities Louis always expected her to make him a visit before going to bed, when she would perch on the arm of his chair and rattle off the news of the evening for his amusement. A few months after the Grand-Dauphin's death this fascinating young princess died suddenly of a kind of measles; her husband, utterly broken-hearted, was laid in the grave six days afterward, and their oldest son, the third dauphin in succession, died a fortnight later. Two years after this, the youngest son of the Grand-Dauphin, also died very suddenly; and Louis the Fourteenth at seventy-six years old, was left with no other descendants than his grandson, the young king of Spain, and his great grandson, a sickly boy of four years old, second son of the Duke of Burgundy. In another year his own long life came to an end, and this feeble youth succeeded him as Louis the Fifteenth.

When the king found that he had but a short time to live he called his great-grandson to his bedside, and in the presence of the courtiers who crowded around, made him an address which the prince afterwards had framed, and hung up over the head of his bed, though unfortunately it never influenced his conduct.

"My child," said the dying man, "you are going to be a great king. Remember your duty to God; try

to keep peace with your neighbors. I have loved war too much; do not be like me in that, nor in the useless spending of money. Try to improve the condition of your people, which I have been so unfortunate as not to be able to do. Darling, I give you my blessing with all my heart." Hearing some of his servants sobbing, he said, "What are you crying for? Did you think that I was immortal?" He remarked to Madame de Maintenon, "It is not so hard to die as I thought it would be." When he was told that prayers were offered in the churches for his life, he said, "That is not worth while. It is my salvation that needs praying for." And thus passed away another in the long procession of kings, each possessing great powers for good and evil, who so used those powers that we come to their last hours with a sense of relief.

"I loved war too much," the king had said on his death-bed. It was too late now for his people to benefit by the discovery. His reign of seventy-two years had brought them so low that instead of sorrow there was open rejoicing among them at his death. If he had set an example to his successor of wise and just government, instead of leaving him some cheap good advice, France might have been saved the woful miseries which the eighteenth century was to see it suffer.

The age of Louis the Fourteenth is graced by many great names. Poets, dramatists, painters and sculptors, distinguished preachers, elegant essayists, and men of science in almost every department, shed a lustre over the period.

The large-hearted Fénelon said of Louis, "God

will surely have compassion upon a prince beset from his youth by flatterers." One incident will show you the nature of his early training. While he was a boy, the Prince of Condé, one of the most distinguished men in his kingdom, entered the room where he was studying with his tutor. Louis, with a natural feeling of respect and politeness, rose, and began to converse with his visitor bareheaded. One of the persons present gravely took the young king's hat from the chair where he had placed it, and presented it to him. The prince, noticing this, observed, "That is quite right; your Majesty should be covered when you converse with your subjects. You do us sufficient honor by a bow." What could one expect from a youth brought up in such a school as this, but boundless self-sufficiency and arrogance?

There was one person living during this reign, who, though not historically important, is so often mentioned that it is worth while to give him a place here. This is "The Man in the Iron Mask," whose face was never seen even by his jailors, and who was kept in prison many years and finally died there. The mask, by the way, was not iron, but black velvet, fastened on by steel springs. For a long time this mysterious personage was supposed to have been either a twin-brother of Louis or some other highly connected individual; but more recent research makes it likely that he was only a foreign ambassador who had had the misfortune to offend the "Grand Monarque." We can hardly believe it now, but it is none the less sadly true that many persons were thrown into prison without trial and often without the least information

to their friends as to what had become of them. They saw nobody, could write no letters, and often died in their wretched dungeons or *cachots*, (places of *hiding*), apparently forgotten by the whole world.

In looking over the one hundred and five years which elapsed from the accession of Louis the Thirteenth to the death of his son, we see a great change for the worse in France. Henry and Sully left it rich and prosperous; Louis the Fourteenth left it overwhelmed with debt, its trade and agriculture depressed by causeless wars, its people so accustomed to despotism that they had forgotten the meaning of freedom. All the splendid palaces the country could contain would not make up for such a loss as that.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LOUIS XV. 1715-1774.



HAVE seen somewhere a picture of the little King Louis the Fifteenth as he was led out upon the balcony of his palace to be shown to the people after his great-grandfather's death. He looks almost like a baby, though he was five years old at that time, and in the picture he has a purple sash round his waist, of which the ends are held by two ladies to keep him from tumbling down. There was not a person nearly enough related to him, according to court notions, to lead him by the hand.

Poor little fellow! It is sad to see him so lonely, so

“great” and so helpless. The late king had made a will appointing a council of Regency to govern during his minority, but this will was treated like so much waste paper, and the Duke of Orleans, one of the worst men in the kingdom, was made Regent. He was absolutely without principle, and led so shameful a private life that it would have been impossible to find any one to set a worse example to the young king.

The Regent had a great desire to be popular, and began his reign by opening the prison-doors to numbers of the miserable people shut up in *cachots*, many of whom had been confined there for offences now forgotten. Some of them never knew why they had been imprisoned at all. One was a traveler from Italy who had been arrested and thrown into prison on the very day of his arrival in Paris, thirty-five years before; it was thought it must have been a mistake! Such are the results of trusting any man with power for which he is not responsible to his fellow-countrymen.

This was a good beginning, but the next acts of the Regent were not so creditable to him. A Chamber of Justice (so called) soon became a court of frightful tyranny. Under pretence of exposing frauds committed against the government, a general prosecution was begun against contractors and others, in which torture was frequently used to make the victim confess a crime and give up his money. To make sure of being arrested, a man needed only to be rich and outside of the circle of the court. Many people were known even to commit suicide to escape the grasp of the law.

All this did little good to the finances, for, as usual,

the rich and noble contrived to seize a great part of the money thus gained, so that it could not be applied to the use of the country. The national revenue had been exhausted for three years ahead by mortgaging the taxes; that is, getting loans from rich people, to be collected by them from the taxes of the next three years, and there were no more lenders to be found. Then the old plan was resorted to of debasing the coin. People were required to bring their money to the mint and to receive back new coins containing only four-fifths of the precious metal, and these were to pass current for the whole value.

It was during the regency of Orleans that the strange commercial delusion called the "Mississippi Scheme" arose in France. This scheme was contrived by a Scotchman named John Law, who thought he was going to make the country and himself immensely rich by it. The Regent, distracted by the need of money, eagerly grasped at the idea. Law's first plan was only that the government should issue a great quantity of paper money, which is merely a promise to pay gold and silver at some later time, and is very convenient if the gold and silver are ready to be paid when that time comes, which was not the case in France under the Regency.

At first the success of the plan was something wonderful. The government paid all its debts promptly, (in paper); money (so called) was plenty, and every body felt rich. Before this joyful state of feeling had time to cool off, Law got up a company in connection with the Bank, to trade in Louisiana, which had in the last reign been taken possession of by France. It was reported that there was enough gold and silver

on the banks of the Mississippi to furnish the world, and a stock company was formed which gave people who put their money into it the right to a certain proportion of the profits. The amount required for the enterprise was divided into shares, and the person who could buy the most of these shares would, according to the plan, be the richest in the end, and so everybody, from princes to chambermaids, rushed to subscribe to the stock.

By-and-by there began to be whispers that all was not right. Emigrants were sent over to the land of promise, and the city of New Orleans was founded and named after the Regent, but the ships laden with gold did not appear in the harbors. Instead of them came letters from the emigrants telling of cruel neglect, disappointment and suffering. Some far-sighted people began to dispose privately of their shares and bank-notes. The Prince of Conti, a member of the Royal family, and one of the richest men in the kingdom, forced the bank to redeem his notes, and secured three cart-loads of coin. Soon there was as great a rush to sell Mississippi shares as there had been to buy them. Then the bank declared itself unable to pay the cash for its notes, and the nation was bankrupt. Words fail to give an idea of the distress produced by this fearful blow. Thousands who had been well off were reduced to beggary. The price of provisions became so high that multitudes actually died of starvation. The scheme which was to have paid off the public debt increased it by nearly a hundred millions. Law, who had at least the merit of believing in his own plans, and had brought a large fortune to France

with him, fled from the country, taking scarcely enough money to supply him with the necessaries of life. He died in poverty, maintaining to the last that his ideas were correct, and that only unavoidable misfortune had prevented him from realizing his highest hopes.

The eight years of misrule under the fickle and indolent Regent, and Cardinal Dubois his infamous minister, were now drawing to an end. Both these men, worn out with dissipation, died in the year when the young king was declared of age to govern for himself. A distinguished writer says of the new king, "There was nothing royal about him but his face." He was handsome, cold-hearted, fond of low pleasures, and utterly averse to books, as well as to all other sorts of learning; his own pleasure was his whole world. As for caring anything about the well-being of his subjects, we cannot imagine him to have ever done it for a moment. Though Louis was no student, he had teachers, as other children have. During the time when he had lessons to learn, as etiquette did not permit the royal youth to receive the whippings which were then thought necessary for children who would not study, his governess hired a poor man's son to study with him and take the whippings for him whenever he deserved them.

After the death of the Duke of Orleans his place was filled by the Duke of Bourbon, a man who had all the wickedness of Orleans, without his talent. For three years he misgoverned the unhappy people of France, debasing the coin, levying enormous taxes which were squandered in follies, and making himself

odious to rich as well as poor. His most important public act was bringing about a marriage between Louis and Maria Leczynski, the daughter of a deposed king of Poland, who was living on charity in Germany.

The new queen was amiable and rather pretty, but had little force of character, and never obtained any influence over her boy-husband, who soon began to neglect her for other women, according to the fashion of French kings. If we were to imagine the new queen as journeying towards Paris from her obscure retreat in Germany over the beautiful hard roads which now make France such a delightful country to travel in, it would be quite a mistake. A writer of the time says of her arrival, "Never shall I forget the horror of the miseries we were enduring in France when the queen came. * * Everybody was thinking of the harvest, which it had not been possible to get in on account of the continual rains; the poor farmer was watching anxiously for a dry moment; meanwhile, the district was beaten with many a scourge. The peasants had been sent to prepare the roads over which the queen was to pass, but they were only the worse for it, so that her majesty was often within an ace of drowning; the attendants pulled her from the carriage by the strong arm as best they might. In several places she and her suite were swimming in the water which spread everywhere in spite of all the pains that had been taken with the roads by a tyrannical ministry."

The misconduct of the Duke of Bourbon finally procured his dismissal from office, and Louis turned over the government to his old tutor, the abbé Fleury, who was made Cardinal, that he might be noble enough

to have the honor of directing the king's affairs. He was then seventy-three years old, and might have been thought about ready to leave the scene; but he lived to be ninety, hard at work all the while. The early years of his administration are the brightest spot in that dreadful eighteenth century. Wishing to keep the peace at home, he did not dare to tax the lands of the privileged classes, but he practised such strict economy in all parts of the public business, and even in the king's own household, that no part of the revenue was wasted. The coin was raised to its true standard, commerce and agriculture began to flourish, new colonies were sent to the far distant America and India, and France had a breathing-spell in which she seemed to be resting after all her troubles. A fair chance was all that she ever needed.

The few wars which the economical Cardinal Fleury allowed his country to be dragged into under him, were not conducted with much spirit or good judgment until Marshal Saxe, a famous soldier, came to serve in his army. At the battle of Fontenoy he was victorious over the English, and had some other successes which restored the good name of France. Over his tomb in Strasburg a monument is still standing, erected, as the inscription upon it says, by Louis XV., "the author and witness of his victories." A very easy way this to be the author of a victory!

It was after this campaign that Louis acquired the extremely ill-deserved name of "The Well-Beloved" — "*Le bien aimé*." He was very ill, and professed to repent of the bad life he had led—perhaps he did repent of it when he thought he was going to die—

and his people showed the wildest joy when they heard that he was getting well. "If he dies," they cried, "it will be because he went to fight for us!" Louis's cold heart was moved by their affection, and he asked with some feeling: "What have I ever done for my people that they should love me so?" but he did not ask, "what can I do hereafter?" It was the last gleam of enthusiastic loyalty. After that there were no more rejoicings until the day of his death.


During the course of this war a great struggle had taken place between the English and French in India. Thanks to the skill of the French general Dupleix and the bravery of the French troops, their nation came off with the highest honors. When peace was made in 1748 by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, it was expected that France would demand some advantages in return for all her losses. Louis, however, remarked that he made war like a prince, not like a merchant; and all that his country had to show for a bloody strife of seven years was a navy almost destroyed, commerce ruined and an enormous public debt created.

The governors of provinces had taken advantage of the weakness which accompanied the good Fleury's great age to oppress the people in the old way, and he himself had imposed a new burden on them called the *corvée*, which was an obligation to keep the public highways in order. This was to be done, not by the nobles who traveled over them and whose lands they improved, not by the rich merchants whose goods were carried on them from place to place, but by the laboring men—the peasants—already crushed by their taxes,

who were required to work on them without pay for a certain number of days in the year. Forced work on public buildings was also part of this imposition. As we read of such things, we wonder that the poor wretches did not rise in a body and revenge themselves on their oppressors, as in the days of the Jacquerie; but their time had not yet come.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE END OF A BAD LIFE.—1748-1774.

RANCE had a little rest between the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle and the breaking out in 1756 of the Seven Years' War—the same which is called in American history the French and Indian War. A country naturally so rich does not take long to recover its strength if it is only let alone; and though the taxes were heavy, the general prosperity kept on increasing in spite of them. The colonies in America, especially those in the West Indies, were beginning to be profitable. Those who looked at the country only from the outside thought that all was going well.

But the king—what shall we say of him? The less said about him the better. During the war he had shown some gleams of courage and spirit; now these were all gone, and he gave himself up entirely to a woman named Madame de Pompadour, who in fact ruled France for twenty years. All public business

went on in her boudoir; the first people in the land were candidates for her favor, since nothing could be got from the king without her influence; even generals in the army and bishops in the church were appointed by her means. What kind of generals and bishops they were likely to be can be easily imagined.

The expenditure of the public money became frightful. The favorite was allowed to draw bills "at sight" upon the treasury, signed by her with the king's name, for whatever amounts she chose; it was the business of the king's ministers to pay these bills when they were presented, and to find money for the purpose by borrowing or by taxes. To try to please the worn-out king, Madame de Pompadour built one costly pleasure-house after another, decorating them according to her own fancy, and squandering such countless sums of money on them as exceeded even the wasteful expenditures of Louis the Fourteenth. If her patronage had done the fine arts any good we might have had more patience with her, but the things she delighted in were so ugly that the age she lived in has been called "the era of bad taste."

In the midst of the disorders which were the natural consequence of such a state of things, a man named Damiens tried to assassinate the king by stabbing him with a pen-knife. The blow scarcely drew blood, but the king was greatly alarmed, thinking that the weapon might have been poisoned. He had the presence of mind to point out the assassin, whom he recognised by his being the only man in the crowd with a hat on; then went home and took to his bed, sending post-haste for his physician and his confessor. When the

wound was discovered to be a mere scratch, he troubled himself no longer about the state of his soul, but went on in his old way. All the tortures that could be applied failed to draw from the murderer the name of any one who had knowledge of his intention, and he was executed as Ravallac had been, according to the barbarous law of the times. Holes were torn in his flesh with red-hot pincers, and then melted lead was poured into the wounds. These tortures were continued for four hours, the executioners being careful not to touch any part that could affect his life. When it was plain that he could bear no more, his hands and feet were tied to four horses, which were then driven in different directions, tearing his body to pieces.

If we were not told it on good authority we could not believe that all this was done in an open square, while the windows and balconies overlooking it were crowded with "noble" lords and ladies, delighting in the spectacle.

During the time we have described, the Seven Years' War had begun, (1756). To the astonishment of all Europe, Louis joined himself with Austria, which had for more than two hundred years been the enemy of France. The secret of this was that the Empress-Queen, Maria Theresa, had written a letter with her own hand, (a rare honor among kings and queens), to Madame de Pompadour, in which she addressed her as "cousin," as if she had been really a queen: and this so flattered her vanity that she made Louis take the part of Austria against England and Prussia.

As usual, we will omit here the details of the war.

We have read in American history the part that most interests us; the expedition against Fort Du Quesne by Braddock and Washington, the taking of Quebec by Wolfe, and the driving away from their homes of the simple-minded peasants of Acadia, (now Nova Scotia), by the English. These incidents are much more interesting to us than what went on in Europe during that cruel struggle which ended in taking away from France almost all her possessions in America except the wilderness west of the Mississippi. For her it was a most disgraceful peace. England got the best of everything that was to be given away, in Europe, Asia, Africa and America. Spain was obliged to give up several rich colonies, while Austria and Prussia, who had lost, between them, three hundred and twenty thousand men and millions of money, remained precisely as they were before the war.

This treaty was even more distasteful to the French nation than that of Aix-la-Chapelle had been, and from this time they looked upon the king with open contempt. The feeling of loyalty was dead in their hearts, and they only sighed for the time when the figure that disgraced the throne should be removed from it. Louis had a succession of ministers who have been compared to the figures in a kaleidoscope, so rapidly did they shift and vary according to the turns of court favor. Of these, the only one who can be mentioned with honor was the Duke de Choiseul: he, though he made some mistakes, seems really to have had the good of his country at heart. He could not stop the river of corruption nor revive the dead body of the public credit, but he did what he could, and the

French government became more respectable than it had been since the early days of Fleury.

Among the events of those troubled times, one which must not be passed over, was the suppression in France of the famous order of the Jesuits, or Roman Catholic "Society of Jesus." It would be impossible to explain, in our small space, all the causes which led to this result; but Choiseul was the chief mover in it. Their property was taken away from them, and their society declared to be at an end in 1773.

While Choiseul was at the head of affairs, France gained possession of a piece of territory that she has since been very proud of. This was a small rocky island in the Mediterranean, southeast of France, called Corsica. In former times it had belonged to Genoa, in Italy; but being very harshly treated by the Genoese, the Corsicans had rebelled and were now struggling for independence. Genoa, despairing of conquering these brave islanders, sold her claim, such as it was, to France. In vain did the Corsicans protest against this, saying that they were not to be bought and sold like a flock of sheep sent to market. In vain did they make at the battle of Golo a rampart of their dead and wounded together, behind which they could reload their guns. After three years' fighting the French succeeded in putting down the rebellion, and two months after the final submission of Corsica a child was born there who will appear in our history under the name of Napoleon Bonaparte.

Previous to this time a remarkable series of deaths had occurred in the royal family, which remind us of the last years of Louis the Fourteenth. The Dauphin,

a man in every respect the opposite of his father, lived a pure and virtuous life in the company of his mother, Maria Leczynski, and his wife and children, as distinct from that of the vile court as if they had been on another continent. This oasis in the desert was broken up by the death of the Dauphin, his wife and his mother, all within a short time, leaving his three sons to grow up without the tender care which had watched over their infancy. These sons were afterward Louis the Sixteenth, Louis the Eighteenth, and Charles the Tenth.

It seems to bring the events we are observing very near to us when we know that the youngest of these brothers lived until 1836, a time within the memory of many of our parents.

Madame de Pompadour was dead, but her place was soon supplied by an infamous woman whom Louis made Countess Du Barry. The Duke de Choiseul, Louis's prime minister, remonstrated with the king against this new scandal, and Du Barry never rested until she had procured his disgrace—for that is what it was considered to be dismissed from the royal council. A "*lettre de cachet*" requested Choiseul to retire to his estate in the country, where he spent the rest of his life in the company of intelligent and cultivated people, and was happier than he had ever been while breathing the impure air of the court.

These "*lettres de cachet*" were orders under the king's seal, (*cachet* being the French for seal), for the imprisonment of some person accused or suspected of a crime. They were introduced by Louis the Eleventh, who thought nothing of shutting up his subjects

in dungeons without a trial by law, whenever they offended him. Cardinal Richelieu made great use of this privilege. It is related that a distinguished general of Louis the Thirteenth was shut up for twelve years in the Bastille without ever being able to find out the reason. At the end of the first seven years the king said to Richelieu that it was against his conscience to keep any longer in prison a man like the Marshal de Bassompierre, against whom no charge could be made, and that he must let him go. The Cardinal replied coolly that so many things had passed through his mind since Bassompierre's imprisonment that he really could not remember what was the cause of it. Whereupon the Marshal remained in close confinement for five years longer, not being allowed even to see his family, until the death of the Cardinal procured his release. That Louis the Fourteenth was guilty of the use of *lettres de cachet* is proved by the number of prisoners released from the *cachots* when the Duke of Orleans came into office. But the crowning shame of it was reserved for the days of Louis the Fifteenth. When all other known ways of getting money were exhausted, blank *lettres de cachet* were sold to any one who would pay for them, and in this way any rich man could get revenge upon an enemy, or any extravagant man could dispose of a troublesome creditor. One of Louis's ministers is said to have given away many thousands of these orders, merely to make himself popular.

After the retirement of Choiseul comes a long line of ministers, each with some new plan for extorting money from the people, of whom one, the Abbé

Terray, said they were a sponge, made to be squeezed. This man, with the consent of the king, made a horrible arrangement called the "Pacte de Famine,"—famine-bargain. First of all the farmers were forbidden to send their grain to other countries for sale. This made the price very low in France, where great quantities were thrown on the merchants' hands because there was no sale for it. Terray then bought up all that he could get at this low rate, sent it out of the country in government vessels, and then had it brought back again and sold at an enormous price. The king was a partner in the profits of this enterprise. If any indignant citizen dared to utter a word of complaint, a *lettre de cachet* promptly sent him to the Bastille.

This is only one among hundreds of such outrages that might be mentioned, but which it is useless to dwell upon. It was like pouring water into a sieve to try to fill the ever-grasping hand of Du Barry. The king, sunk in sloth, permitted those about him to do as they pleased so long as his pleasures were not interfered with; and when warned that his country was on the very edge of a volcano, would laugh and say, "Never mind; it will last out my time!" And his favorites echoed, "After us may come the Deluge." After them the deluge did come, a deluge of blood.

The condition of the peasants daily grew worse, though this seems hardly possible. The poorest were really serfs, bought and sold with the land they lived on, for they had no power to change their place. Whole tracts of land were turned into game preserves where animals ran wild, certain always to destroy the

crops of the poor man whose land lay in the way. "Protected" hares often ate a fifth of what he raised. The noble might, (and often did), forbid him to plough his ground for fear of disturbing the young game, or to manure it properly for fear of destroying its flavor, but the tax-gatherer came round as usual. Four times a year each family was compelled to buy a certain quantity of salt, whether they wished it or not, that the *gabelle* might help to fill the king's empty purse. The *corvée* ruined thousands of farmers who had to give their labor on roads and bridges when they were called upon for it, though their crops might be perishing for want of attention. The king's business always came first.

During these many years of despotism, the Parliaments alone, the ancient courts of law, preserved some sort of independence. They had many a struggle with the king in which to the last they kept their self-respect, until, finding that they could not be controlled, Louis abolished them altogether, appointing in their place bodies of men who he thought could be more easily managed.

Towards the close of this reign occurred the first of those disgraceful "partitions" of Poland among Russia, Austria and Prussia, which the other powers in Europe tamely looked on and allowed. France made no protest, and the king observed, as if he had been an indifferent spectator, that had Choiseul been at the head of his ministry such an occurrence could not have taken place.


For a long time nothing had been so much desired in France as the death of the king. At last the wished-

for moment came. After a reign of nearly fifty-nine years, Louis the Fifteenth was about to leave the world, and the only fear of his people was that he might get well again. The disease was malignant small-pox; and though his daughters had never had it, they shut themselves up in the loathsome sick-room to nurse him, and remained there till all was over. Then the corpse, forced into a coffin too small for it, was hurried to St. Denis at full gallop, amidst the scoffs and insults of the populace.

“A terrible noise, like thunder,” says a writer of the time, was heard in the palace as soon as Louis’s death was announced. It was the crowd of courtiers, hurrying with all their might to congratulate the new king and queen.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LOUIS XVI. 1774–1793.

HEN Louis the Sixteenth and his young wife were told of the old King’s death, they fell on their knees, crying, “Oh, God, help us! We are too young to reign.” Young or old, it would have made little difference. With such a legacy of misery and confusion as they fell heirs to, and their imperfect education, so little fitting them for the part they were to play in life, it was impossible that they should not fail.

Louis had been married, four years before, to Marie Antoinette, daughter of Maria Theresa of Austria.

He was now twenty years old, his queen a year younger. During the days of his grandfather's worst degradation, after the Dauphin's death, he had been called "*Louis le Désiré*"—"the Desired." He had had a good education as far as books went, but had never been taught the duties of a king. These he had to feel out for himself, and a book of "Reflections" written by him, shows us how hard he struggled to do his duty and act for the best interests of his people.

Marie Antoinette had been brought up even worse than her husband. Married at fifteen, she was ignorant of everything but how to appear to advantage in society. She was thoughtless, extravagant and self-willed, and had not that fine quality called *tact*, which would have enabled her, with her handsome face and charming manners, to make friends with all classes of people. As it was, she offended the stiff old ladies in her train by ridiculing the tedious etiquette of their court, and disgusted the common people by her want of sympathy for them and by her frivolous amusements and occupations. Even the most stupid of Louis's subjects were beginning to feel that they had some rights of their own, though few people had yet been found bold enough to say so. When some one asked the king by what quality he would like to be known, he said that if he could have his choice, he would like to be called "Louis the Severe." Poor Louis! he was only the Inconsistent. Timid and hesitating when something of importance was to be decided,—obstinate in the wrong place and yielding in the wrong place,—scarcely any misfortune could have happened to him so great as to be born a king.

Although he was extremely popular in the beginning of his reign, before people knew much about him, he soon lost favor by his unkingly ways and appearance. Instead of the fine features and lofty gait of his grandfather, he had a heavy, rather vulgar-looking face, a shuffling step, (a great disadvantage to a man in any station), a slow, hesitating way of speaking, and an awkward manner. He might have had all these combined with sound judgment and discretion, but he did not. They were only the signs of a weak and vacillating, though upright soul. Louis made a bad choice of a first minister. He appointed the Count de Maurepas, a foolish old courtier, with a head full of antiquated notions instead of the new thoughts and ideas which were gaining ground in France every day. A better selection was that of the Minister of Finance, Turgot, who was in money matters the ablest statesman the eighteenth century had yet seen.

His motto was, "No more borrowing, no bankruptcies, no new taxes." He wished to abolish the odious *corvée*, and in its place to lay a very moderate tax on land, which would bring the burden of public improvements where it belonged, on those who were to profit by them. This excellent regulation was violently opposed by the land-owners, who declared that it would ruin them, and the Parliament refused to register it. The king, who approved of Turgot's plans, and would gladly have seen them carried out, held a "bed of justice" and compelled the court to register the law, but it was done with sullen anger, which showed that a storm was coming. It might have been possible, even then, to save the country

if the "privileged classes" could have been persuaded to do their share towards it, but they were blinded by mistaken self-interest, and rushed headlong to their ruin.

We have not space to tell of all the wise measures proposed by Turgot and resisted by the country as if he had been its worst enemy, even the very people he was trying to help often taking part against him. The queen, who did not know what self-denial meant, disliked him because he insisted on reducing the expenses of the royal household. The king, though he had promised to support Turgot in all his plans, weakly gave way in the face of so much opposition; and this admirable minister, the only man who could have brought order out of the chaos which prevailed in France, was abruptly dismissed. His friend Malesherbes, another wise and patriotic man to whom Louis had given a high position, saw how useless all their efforts were, and also resigned his place.

The defeat of such men was a great triumph for the wealthy classes, which included not only the nobility but many merchants and others whose gains would have been lessened by the free-trade that Turgot tried to establish between different parts of France. All attempts at reform were now abandoned. Louis invited M. Necker,* a celebrated Swiss banker, to take charge of the finances.

But Necker had not the boldness of Turgot. He did not interfere with the privileges of the great lords or the wealthy merchants, but he was successful in raising

*M. before French names, stands for *Monsieur*.

new loans, and he abolished about six hundred useless offices, making a great saving to the government. During the whole time that he continued in office he refused to accept any salary whatever, that he might with more assurance reduce the salaries paid to others.

Ever since the death of Louis the Fourteenth there had been in France a set of men who were constantly writing and talking about freedom, and trying to make people understand what a bad system they were living under. These men called themselves philosophers; and though in the degraded reign of Louis the Fifteenth many of them had learned to scoff at religion and despise morality, their ideas about free government were just, and were silently preparing people's minds for the great change that was to come before the century closed.

The American Revolution, which had broken out just before Necker was called into office, had also a great effect in France. It showed that it was possible to rebel against even a very strong government, and, together with the doctrines of the philosophers, it set the French nation to thinking. Matters were brought to a crisis when our Congress sent the venerable Benjamin Franklin and two other envoys to Paris to ask for help for the patriots.

Louis did not wish a war with England, and Necker was opposed to spending money unnecessarily; but the French people were so wild with their new enthusiasm for liberty that the king did not venture to resist them. He sent some ships of war to this country under the command of his best officers, and in 1778 acknowledged the independence of the United States. Before

this the generous La Fayette had thrown himself and his fortune into our cause as a volunteer; and the names of the French commanders, De Grasse, D'Estaing and Rochambeau, are familiar to the readers of American history. The support of France was very useful to us in our great struggle, and America has always remained grateful for it.

Franklin set an example of true republican simplicity to the astonished court of Versailles. In the midst of the curled and powdered nobles, with their coats covered with spangles and embroidery, and their three-cornered hats carried jauntily under the arm, it was refreshing to see the old American with his long, unpowdered hair, his comfortable fur cap, and a drab coat such as a farmer might wear when he took his grain to market. They admired him as they would have done some new and curious animal, and the ladies made a great pet of him. This was not exactly in his line, but as he was satisfied with having succeeded in his mission, he endured it with a good grace.

The acknowledgment of American independence led immediately to a war between England and France. It is not necessary for us to enter into the particulars of this war. It is enough to say that when peace was made between the three nations at Versailles, in 1783, (at the close of our Revolutionary war), France came off with honor, and the disgrace of the Peace of Paris, at the end of the Seven Years' War, was in some degree wiped out.

At home she had nothing to be proud of. The extravagance of the queen and her friends, which Louis had not the energy to restrain nor Necker the

power to reduce, kept the treasury empty in spite of all that the great financier could do. No matter what the minister provided, more was sure to be spent. He did not, as Turgot had done, go to the root of the matter by taxing all in proportion to their means. But even with his half-measures he offended the upper classes so that they made his position very uncomfortable; and when the imbecile Maurepas denied him a place in the state-council because he was a Protestant, he could bear it no longer. He resigned his office and went back to Switzerland.

Through all the distresses of the country, and the perplexities of the king, Marie Antoinette and the court pursued their round of gayeties for which the nation was paying so dearly. As the queen grew older she freed herself from the excessive restraints of etiquette, which were so irksome to her, and her motives were misrepresented by those who had a spite against her. Of these there were, unfortunately, too many, for she had taken no pains to make herself loved by the people, though she was most gracious to those immediately about her. Her diversions, too, were always of a costly character. Among others, she had what she called an English farm, fitted up near Versailles, into which some millions of francs of the people's money were poured, that she might amuse herself according to her fancy. This was called the Little Trianon, to distinguish it from another called the Great Trianon, built by Louis the Fourteenth. The king's brothers formed part of this court circle, to be supported at the expense of the nation. The elder of these, the Count de Provence, who afterward became

Louis the Eighteenth, had the most ability of any of the family; the younger, the Count d' Artois, afterward Charles the Tenth, was dissipated, frivolous and wrong-headed, while the enormous debts which he contracted, without any other means of paying them than by new impositions on the people, showed his utter selfishness and want of principle.

The King in the meantime was helpless and uneasy. Although economical in his personal expenses, he could not (or did not) prevent the thousands of court parasites from feeding upon the public purse and drawing every year immense pensions for doing nothing. Louis was extremely fond of hunting and of using locksmith's tools; these were the only amusements he cared for. When he could shut himself up for a whole day at a time, working away at locks and keys like a laborer who had a family to provide for, he was happy; but when M. Necker came to talk to him about public affairs he became restless and confused. He knew that everything was going wrong, but not feeling in himself the power to set it right, he shuffled out of all responsibility whenever he could. When his brother-in-law, the Emperor Joseph the Second, visited Paris, he was astonished to find that Louis had never taken the trouble to visit the Hotel des Invalides (the great hospital for soldiers), nor the military schools of Paris.

After Necker had retired, Louis tried several different ministers of finance, but could get none that saw any way out of the difficulties until M. de Calonne, a reckless, dashing man, deeply in debt and distinguished equally for his elegant manners and his dissipated

life, found out the golden path. His plan was to spend money like water; that would make every body rich. The courtiers got all they wanted, only for the asking; the idea of economy was ridiculed as an old-fashioned prejudice; every one who came in contact with the machinery of government was liberally paid, and the queen spent more than ever. We naturally ask where the money was found for all these purposes, when the tax-payers were already so burdened that another straw must break their backs. It was done by borrowing! Calonne seemed to think he had invented this operation, so proud was he of the success of his plan. In four years he had borrowed no less than eight hundred millions of francs, which there was no provision for paying. Meanwhile the distress of the people was becoming intolerable; angry murmurs arose on all sides, and as it was impossible for the government to pay even the interest on the loans made to it, the brilliant Calonne thought it was time to try something else. So he called together the Assembly of the Notables.

The notables were selected almost entirely from what were called the privileged classes—the nobles and the clergy. Calonne made them a speech in which he owned that he could not make the revenue of the country equal to expenses by a hundred millions or so, but laid the blame upon Necker. Then he proposed a remedy more sensible than might have been expected from him, which was that the nobles and clergy should be taxed as well as the rest of the people. La Fayette—our La Fayette—stood up boldly for this measure, though he was rich and would have

had to pay large taxes; but he was almost the only one who did. The rest would not listen to it. Calonne was dismissed and another favorite of the queen's, named Brienne, put in his place, but he did no better. Just at this time somebody proposed a meeting of the States-General.

The word acted like magic. How could they have forgotten that old guardian of the public interests, a representative assembly? They were very tired of being governed by kings and ministers; it had not worked well. Here was something that would set them all right again. The king consented, though rather reluctantly, and recalled Necker, who was quite willing to try once more to hold the helm of the unmanageable ship. Neither of them saw that it was drifting on towards a whirlpool which was to dash it to pieces!


There were many difficulties in the way of calling together this assembly, which had not been summoned since Louis the Thirteenth came of age, in 1614. A hundred and seventy-five years! Great changes had taken place in that time. Richelieu and Mazarin had done their part in taking away from the people all energy for self-government; Louis the Fourteenth had made "The king wills it" the only reason necessary for any act; Louis the Fifteenth had said to the Parliament of Paris, "You have heard my intentions; I desire that you will conform to them. I order you to begin your duties. I forbid any discussions contrary to my wishes."

The day for such sayings and doings was over. After all sorts of delays, the States-General opened on

the fifth day of May, 1789. That day marks the beginning of the French Revolution; the greatest political and social earthquake the world has ever seen.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. 1789.

 THE Assembly which now met at Versailles was composed of representatives from three distinct classes—the nobles, the clergy and the Third Estate, which last corresponds to the English House of Commons. Each member of each class was elected by votes of citizens belonging to that class. On the day before the opening of the States there was a grand procession of all the members to the church of Notre Dame, to take part in a religious service there. The King was present with all his household—hundreds of lords and ladies, blazing with gold and jewels, and fanning the air with their lofty plumes as they rode along. The nobles who belonged to the States-General wore the gorgeous costume of the time of Louis the Thirteenth; long cloaks embroidered with gold, lace cravats, and “Henri Quatre” hats turned up at the side, with white plumes. The clergy were in the dress appropriate to their various ranks, from the purple velvet robe of the archbishop to the flowing mantle and black cassock of the *cure*, or parish priest. The *Tiers Etat* or Third Estate,—that is, the Commons,—were required to wear short black cloaks,

white muslin cravats and a peculiar kind of slouched hat. No wonder that they looked angrily from their own humble dress, purposely intended to make them look like servants in livery, to the magnificent array of their fellow-workers, and said one to another, "All this is bought with our money!"

As soon as they had assembled and had listened to a gracious speech from the king, there began to be trouble. The Commons wished that all the Three Estates—the nobles, the clergy and themselves—should vote together; the other two insisted that all business should be done separately. For five weeks the Commons sat awaiting the surrender of the others, refusing even to look over the pile of letters and documents which lay unopened upon their table, for fear of appearing to give up their principles; then, as the rest still held out, the representatives of the common people voted that they would proceed to business at once, with or without the other orders, under the name of the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

The king and court were astonished at such unheard-of boldness, and at once began to devise means for putting it down. Necker proposed to the king that he should hold a "royal sitting" in the Assembly; in other words, that he should go to them in person and tell them what he thought of their conduct.

Under pretence that the Hall of Assembly could not be occupied while the preparations for the king's visit were going on, the members were shut out when they went as usual the next morning to take their seats. The president, who was the great astronomer Bailly, protested against this, and all the deputies went to a

tennis-court near by, where they took a solemn oath that they would continue to meet together for the transaction of public business as long as the condition of the country required it.

To prevent a second meeting of the Assembly, some of the nobles hit upon the brilliant plan of hiring the room where they had met for a game of tennis on the next day. As if a body of men like that could be hindered in their plans by such childish tricks! The members immediately made arrangements to hold their session in a church. Here they were joined by a large proportion of the clergy, who were more in sympathy with them than with the court party, and the "royal sitting" was announced for the day following.

There was no end to the foolish devices for mortifying and irritating the Assembly. Its members were ordered to enter by a side door, the principal one being reserved for the nobility, and when the President came to this door he found it locked. He knocked repeatedly to have it opened, but was always told "it was not yet time." There was a pouring rain, and no shelter had been provided. The members of the Third Estate waited outside until they were drenched through, and when they were at last admitted they found the nobles comfortably seated and the king ready to give them his commands.

His majesty blamed them very much for their bad conduct, but graciously condescended to overlook it, and agreed to various changes which had been demanded. Too late! too late! It was poor Louis's fate to yield when he should have been firm, and be obstinate when he should have yielded. His concessions

were of no use now; they ought to have been made earlier. And he knew the Commons no better than to finish off by ordering the whole assembly to adjourn,—that is, to break up their session for that day,—and re-assemble on the next in their different halls, each estate to transact business by itself. In case of a further refusal to do this, Louis hinted pretty plainly that he should dissolve them altogether.

Blind king! had he forgotten Charles the First of England and his Parliament? Did he think that the Commons of France, after having had a hundred and fifty years to think the matter over in, were going to be any more easily managed than were the Commons of England?

The king withdrew, followed by the nobles and the greater part of the clergy; the assembly kept their seats. In a short time the royal Master of Ceremonies came in and remarked, "Gentlemen, you have heard the orders of the king." "Yes," replied the President, "and I am now about to take the orders of the Assembly." The officer retired, not knowing what to do in such singular circumstances, and the Assembly, having been reminded by one of the members that "they were neither more nor less than they had been yesterday," proceeded to vote that any person who should interfere with their liberty should be punished with death.

It was not a wise thing for the queen and her friends to do to advise Louis to call together a body of troops for his defence, but these unfortunate people never did wise things. All their actions at this time seem to us, looking as we do at both sides of the question in the

light of history, to be very foolish. There were many desperate people in Paris at that time, for there was a terrible scarcity of food; and nothing was easier than to rouse them to fury and lead them on to wild deeds of bloodshed and revenge.

The news that Necker, the people's favorite, had been dismissed, was the spark that set fire to the train. A furious mob collected in the gardens of the Palais Royal, where a young man named Camille Desmoulins sprang upon a table and made a speech about Liberty that drove them more frantic than ever. Then seizing a green leaf from a tree he stuck it in his hat for a cockade; instantly the trees were stripped of their leaves, and a green sprig became the emblem of Liberty.

After adorning themselves in this way, the rioters rushed through the streets yelling and shrieking as if they had been an enemy's soldiers sacking the city. They broke into every place where they thought there might be weapons concealed, seized all they could find, and forced the city authorities to order pikes to be made for them, that being the weapon most easily prepared. Fifty thousand pikes were made in two days. The soldiers of the regular army refused to fire upon the mob. Militia companies were organized under the name of the National Guard, and Paris was like a vast camp. The famous tri-color cockade of red, white and blue was adopted. Red and blue were the city colors, and white that of the Duke of Orleans, a worthless demagogue, who, being nearest of kin to the royal family, hoped to be made king if Louis should be dethroned. He was great-grandson of the Regent

who misgoverned France during the infancy of Louis the Fifteenth.

In the midst of this fierce excitement, a report was spread about that the king meant to break up the Assembly by force, and that the cannon of the Bastille would be pointed against the city if there should be any resistance. A terrible cry rang through the streets, "To the Bastille! To the Bastille!" and soon the surging, roaring crowd, was on its way there.

This old fortress had been built for the protection of the city from foreign enemies, and ever since the time of Richelieu had been used as a prison for offenders against the government. All the associations of the cruel "*lettres de cachet*" clustered about it; the very word brought to mind the odious tyranny which had buried alive, as it were, so many good and true souls. It represented to the unthinking mob every abuse that their country had been groaning under since the happy days of Henry the Fourth; no wonder that their first longing, on finding themselves in power, was to destroy it.

No words can paint the fearful scene that followed. The Bastille was bravely defended by its governor, the Marquis de Launay, and his little guard of soldiers, but after a siege of several hours the insurgents forced their way in, murdered the brave governor and three of his officers, and did not pause in its wild fury until the ancient stronghold was a heap of smoking ruins. Only seven prisoners were found there, some of whom were serving out sentences for forgery, of which they had been convicted by the courts, and the rest, relics of a former generation, having lost their memory or

reason, were detained only because the officers did not know what else to do with them. The key of the Bastille was sent by La Fayette to Washington, and was kept by him as a sacred relic at Mount Vernon, where it remains and is exhibited to this day.

While the seven prisoners were carried through the streets on men's shoulders in triumph, the work of destruction was going on behind them. As the old stones were hurled from their places, records were brought to light which inflamed the passions of the assailants more and more. In one cell was found a letter, dated thirty-seven years before. Here is a part of it. "If for my consolation Monseigneur would grant me, for the sake of God and the most blessed Trinity, that I could have news of my dear wife, were it only her name on a card, to show that she is alive ! I shall forever bless the greatness of Monseigneur." Who knows how many years of heart-breaking had gone before the writing of this letter which was never sent ? Or how many years more were endured by the poor wretch before his turn came to be carried out of his cell and laid in an unknown grave ?

But we must not linger over such memorials. We must go back to the lawless rabble that all day and all night rushed howling from one end of Paris to the other. The heads of the officers who fell at their posts were cut off and carried on pikes through the streets, amidst the curses of the populace. . A young girl, supposed to be the daughter of De Launay, narrowly escaped being burned alive in the Bastille yard, and was only rescued by a soldier of the National Guard, who carried her off to a place of safety. Still the great stones of the

fortress are wrenched from their places, and hurled headlong into the ditch, one after another; while far away in the Hotel de Ville, forty-eight thousand pounds of powder are given out to the mob by the trembling officials.

To the king and court, meanwhile, assembled at Versailles, all these things came as disturbing rumors, not quite enough to excite any great alarm, perhaps, but disagreeable. There has been feasting and dancing going on, as usual, in the beautiful orange-garden, and the gay lords and ladies have had their jokes and shrugged their shoulders at the vulgar doings of the *canaille*, (the French name for the common people). Louis has retired for the night, when the Duke de Liancourt, a gentleman of his household, comes to him to say that the Bastille is taken by the Paris mob. "Why, that's a revolt!" says the king, a puzzled look coming over his heavy, good-natured face. "No, Sire," answers the clearer-headed nobleman; "it is a revolution!"

The National Assembly had now been sitting for more than a month. At Louis's request the nobles had joined it, but with a few exceptions it was only in outward form; their hearts were as far from the Commons as ever. Still the pure-minded La Fayette was there, now as ever on the side of liberty, but also on that of law and order; and here and there a man of rank was found large-minded enough to follow his example. The leading spirit of the Assembly was Count Mirabeau, who, rejected from serving with his own order by the votes of his equals, threw himself fiercely into the popular party, and poured

out a torrent of fiery eloquence against the abuses of power.

The day after the storming of the Bastille, a deputation was about to set out from the Assembly to have one more conference with the king, (there had been many such already), to protest against the presence of foreign soldiers and to demand certain reforms. Just before they started the members were told that the king was coming to them, without even a guard. He entered the Assembly room accompanied only by his two brothers, and was received with shouts of applause. He promised all that they wanted; he would send away the soldiers; he would recall Necker; if they would only have confidence in him they need fear nothing.

The applause grew wilder than ever; when the king went home the Assembly accompanied him in a body, as his escort; he could scarcely make his way through the crowd that pressed about him, eager to show their love and confidence. Happy Louis! On the palace balcony stood the beautiful Marie Antoinette with her two children at her side. The eldest, a graceful young girl, was playing with her little brother's long curls, and her eyes filled with tears as she saw her father approaching, as it were, in the arms of his loving subjects. It was a beautiful scene of affection and trust, but it was the last.

Alas! the old distrust soon broke out again. The Count d'Artois, (Louis's youngest brother), and several of the highest nobility, with their families, took the imprudent step of leaving France secretly, some of them in disguise, thus showing that they were in

fear for their lives, and making the feelings of the people more bitter against them than ever.

Louis at least was not afraid. He went to Paris, in spite of the tears and entreaties of the queen, that he might show himself to his people. At the city gates he was met by Bailly, who had just been made Mayor, and who handed him the keys, saying: "These are the same that were given up to King Henry the Fourth, of glorious memory. Then, it was a king who had conquered the people; now, it is a people who are conquering their king!"

At first the populace received the king in grim silence; but after a few kindly words at the Hotel de Ville, (City Hall), their hearts melted and they broke into loud hurrahs. But the calm was only for a moment. To gratify them he put on the tricolored cockade, and gave his consent to La Fayette's being appointed commander of the National Guard, (though it made no difference whether he consented or not); then, all being serene, he went back to his quiet palace at Versailles.

The raging crowd, however, must have a victim. It did not take long to find one. Among the ministers who had succeeded Necker was Foulon, well-known as an oppressor of the poor. When they complained of starvation and asked for help, he said, "Let them eat grass; there's plenty of that!" And now they remembered it. In spite of his white hair and his seventy-four years, he was dragged out from his hiding-place, and with a bunch of hay tied to his back, and a collar of thistles round his throat, he was hanged to a lamp-post. Then his head was cut off and carried about on

a pike, the mouth stuffed full of grass. "Let him eat it himself!" shrieked the crowd. His son-in-law, Berthier, saw the gory head without suspecting whose it was. His own turn was coming. As he was forced through the streets, huge placards were carried with him with such inscriptions as this: "He robbed the king and France!" "He devoured the substance of the people!" "He was the slave of the rich and the tyrant of the poor!" "He drank the blood of the widow and orphan!" Terrible accusations! Like Foulon, he paid the penalty of his crimes by a wretched death, and another head at the end of a pike made its rounds amid the hootings of the populace. From this time the terrible cry "*à la lanterne!*"—"To the lamp-post with him!"—became one of the too-familiar sounds of Paris.

While such things are going on in Paris, dreadful news comes from the provinces. The people have risen; castles and convents are burning; delicate ladies and their daughters are driven from their homes with outrage; nobles are hacked in pieces before the eyes of their wives and children; tax-gatherers are roasted over a slow fire! Title deeds, dating back hundreds of years, are destroyed like waste paper; and—can such things be?—the peasants have even dared to kill the game! The sacred deer and pheasants, to preserve which their poor little farms have become almost a wilderness—these they are destroying for food, with no fear of God or man before their eyes! Clearly, it is time to do something.

The nobles in the National Assembly, who have up to this time stood apart from the Commons in disdainful

silence, declining to vote, though forced to sit in the same room, now press forward eagerly to give up their privileges, according to a plan drawn up by the victorious Necker, now for the third time at the head of the king's council. They cannot do enough. Now they have begun, they are afraid to stop. All taxation is to be in proportion to the wealth of the citizen; no order shall be free from it; no more serfs, no *corvée*, no more game-preserves. Equal rights everywhere. The clergy were as forward as the nobles in giving up their time-honored privileges. In a short time it was voted that the whole system of tithes should be abolished, and that the clergy should depend only on some indefinite promises of the new government to provide for them. The laws were passed, the king gave his consent to them, and once more it seemed as if prudence and good sense might yet save the ship of state from the whirlpool on the brink of which it was sailing.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE REVOLUTION, CONTINUED.—1789–1790.



ADDITIONAL regiments of soldiers were now ordered to Versailles to protect the king. The officers already stationed there gave their newly-arrived brethren a banquet in the palace-theatre, which was graciously lent them by the king for the purpose. Very naturally, their gratitude led

them into the most enthusiastic praise of so amiable a sovereign; they drank his health amidst deafening applause; fair hands distributed the white cockade of the Bourbons, and to crown all, the queen herself did the guests the honor to come into the room, holding the little Dauphin by the hand. Then some strange madness seized the revellers. The tricolor was torn off and trampled under foot; "The Nation," that new-born power which was already so terrible, though they knew it not, was treated with contempt. In their mistaken loyalty, they had only added another to the many daggers aimed at the heart of their unhappy king.

When the news of this banquet reached the starving wretches in Paris, the old fury, which had been lulled a little by the king's pacific visit, broke out again. "What!" they said, "shall we eat our black bread mingled with clay, and too little of it at that, while kings and queens and idle soldiers riot in abundance? The cost of one such dinner would have given half Paris a meal. Down with Aristocrats!"

The long lines of pale, hungry people waiting at the doors of bakers' shops for their turn to buy a little bad bread at famine price—standing *en queue*, as the French call it, that is, one behind another—these caught up the cry, and shouted it to Heaven. And when the hollow-eyed mothers, gaunt with want and misery, shared the poor morsel among their hungry children, and saw their longing eyes beg for more—what wonder that they too should take up the cry, "Down with Tyranny! Death to Aristocrats! Hurrah for Liberty!"

Now began a hideous scene. These same women and others like them, forgetting in their fury that they were women, rushed through the streets like an avalanche, increasing in numbers as they advanced, shrieking, cursing, beating drums, hustling away all who tried to stop them—thus did this frantic female mob force its way through the streets to the Hotel de Ville. They seized any weapon that came to hand, pokers, fire-irons, axes, clubs, rusty old muskets and pistols; and thus armed, howling like demons, demanded that the Commune should give them bread.

The Commune, thus addressed, was a city government established by the National party after the opening of the Assembly at Versailles. Not being able to find the mayor or other officers the furies set fire to the building a fine old edifice, dating back to the time of Henry the Fourth. Fortunately, the fire was put out, but nothing would now satisfy the enraged multitude except marching to Versailles. Louis received them kindly, as he did everybody, and for the moment they were softened, and cried out: "Long live the King!" But quarrels had broken out between them and the soldiers in the palace, and two of the king's body-guard (who were all selected from the nobility) were killed. The mob was constantly increased by fresh arrivals from Paris, and rusty old cannon were dragged along by cart-horses, seized with or without leave wherever they could be found.

At midnight La Fayette arrived with a part of the National Guard. The magic of his presence calmed down the excitement, and Versailles sank into something like repose. He promised the king that his

troops should keep order, and the royal family, worn out by the terrors of the day, retired to rest. Towards morning a band of ruffians broke into the palace by a gate left unguarded, and with horrible threats and cries rushed through the marble corridors that led to the queen's apartment. The sentries are trodden down, run through with a score of pikes; the body-guard fly through the halls, shouting, "Save the queen!" The raging mob penetrate at last to the queen's apartments. They do not find her there; she has taken refuge in those of the king. In their wild spite they run her bed through and through with their bayonets.

La Fayette called in his soldiers and the palace was cleared of the mob. One can not but smile with a sort of sad amusement at reading that as he was flying through the halls towards the private rooms of the king with the hope of saving him, a Master of Ceremonies called out to him, "Monsieur, the king permits you to enter his presence!" Even at a moment like that, the courtier could not forget his etiquette.

Outside the palace, the sea of human beings surges backwards and forwards like a roaring flame. All the scum of Paris has come to Versailles. Robbery goes hand in hand with riot. No one can sleep in the midst of the frightful din; those who have anything to lose must watch it; those who have not must seize what they can. The king's own body-guard has mounted the tricolor; they show themselves on the balconies, waving their hats, with immense cockades stuck in them, which the women in the palace have been busy for the last hour in making.

As the daylight advances there are loud shouts for "the queen! the queen!" She steps out upon the balcony, holding in one hand the princess, in the other Louis the Dauphin. "No children! We want no children!" shriek the crowd. The mother gently pushes her children back into the room and stands alone in full view of the stormy multitude, her hands crossed on her breast. "I am ready to die," she says. True daughter of Maria Theresa!

A man levels his musket at her; it is struck down by a companion. Once more La Fayette comes to the rescue. He kneels and kisses the queen's white hand. Then the rabble shout "Long live the queen!" so easily can their fickle minds be changed. But now a new cry arises and is caught up from mouth to mouth: "The king to Paris!" They want to have him where they can get at him; he must be in their power. There are rumors of an intention to escape. He must not get away.

The king has no choice; he must go. La Fayette tells the people it shall be so. Such a shout rends the air as can almost be heard at Paris, twelve miles away. The morning passes in anxious preparations. The queen looks sadly on the splendors she is leaving; well for her that she does know she is never to see them again. At two o'clock in the day the mournful procession sets out. In the great state-carriage are the king, his sister Elizabeth, his wife and the two children.

Outside—it is hard to give you a picture of the outside. A hundred deputies followed the king in carriages, and so far the procession had some dignity; but in front, at the sides, behind, pressed a ferocious mass

of humanity, giving vent to their brutal passions in howling, dancing and shouting out songs whose evil words were meant to be applied to the royal family. Fishwomen, (the lowest and most degraded class in Paris), sat astride on cannons; carts loaded with flour were escorted by both men and women carrying green boughs, amidst which the glittering ends of lances shone out; loaves of bread were paraded on the ends of bayonets. The soldiers of his Majesty's body-guard straggled along after his carriage, all disarmed, many without their hats, all faint with fatigue. Some one had taken the bloody heads of the guardsmen killed the day before to a barber in Sèvres, and forced him to curl and powder the hair, that they might be known for aristocrats. These were borne aloft on lances until La Fayette saw them and compelled the savages who were carrying them to give up their horrible trophies.

The fishwomen (*poissardes*) shouted to those they met, "Courage, friends! We shall have bread enough now, for here we have the baker and his wife, and their little boy!" This was an allusion to the days of a previous famine, when the king was called a baker because it was said he could provide bread for the people if he would. There was a drizzling rain, while for eight miserable hours the dreary procession slowly wound its way through the throng. At last, weary and sick at heart, they reached the palace of the Tuileries. This journey was called, with a sort of unintentional mockery, "The Joyous Entry."

At the Tuileries they spent a very quiet year. Louis's greatest trial was that he could not hunt; he

does not seem to have concerned himself much about the doings of the Assembly, and they on their part paid small attention to him.

The six-years-old Dauphin was perhaps the happiest of the family. He had a little garden of his own, fenced in by itself, in which the people could see him from the street digging away with all his might, and watching for his radishes and lettuces to come peeping up from the ground with as much pleasure as if he had not been a prince. His sister, Maria Theresa (who was called *Madame Royale*, though she was but a little girl), was not so light-hearted. She was old enough to sympathize with her mother's troubles; and though always gentle and lovely, she grew up under a shadow of sadness that was never cleared away. The king's sister, the excellent Madame Elizabeth, was also with them; his brothers and their families had taken refuge in other countries.

The nobility now emigrated in great numbers, no one caring at this time to prevent their quitting the kingdom provided they left their houses and lands behind them. In the meantime all titles were abolished; the proudest duke, if he remained in France, must be content to be called simply "citizen;" the right of the eldest son to inherit the landed estate was taken away, and parents were compelled to divide their property equally among all their children. In addition to these remarkable changes, almost every man in the country was allowed to vote.

Necker, who was once more minister of finance, had great trouble to "make both ends meet," for previous waste had made the country very poor,

though it was now governed economically enough. In this difficulty the celebrated Talleyrand, himself a bishop, proposed that all the property of the clergy should be confiscated. Their tithes, that is, the taxes collected especially for them, had already been taken away, but they had an enormous amount of real estate or houses and land, besides other possessions. The Church is said to have owned in France a territory larger than all England. These lands the government took for its own use, and as nobody wanted to buy all this property, a kind of paper-money called *assignats* was made, which was to represent it and be redeemed gradually by the sale of the property.

The state paid its debts with this currency, and for a little while it answered as well as real money; but during the troubled times that followed, the property could be sold only for a very small part of its original value, while the government went on issuing assignats for far more than that original value. The less they were good for, the more of them were made by these singular financiers; and the result was of course that they became in the end utterly worthless. The same thing happened to the "Continental Currency" after our own Revolution.

With a view of joining all parties in a state of general good feeling, a theatrical display was got up by the authorities in the year 1790, to celebrate the first anniversary of the storming of the Bastille. It was called the "Fête of the Federation," and was held in the great open square called the "Champ de Mars," (Field of Mars), which is still used in Paris for military parades. The earth was dug out from one part and

piled up in others so as to form vast amphitheatres, which were terraced into seats capable of holding several hundred thousand people.

Every body helped in this work. Abbés, dukes, members of Assembly, stood shoulder to shoulder with shop-keepers and mechanics; even ladies took part, inspired by the general enthusiasm. In the midst of the field an altar was set up; mass was said by the Bishop of Autun, (Talleyrand), and afterward the oath to support the new constitution was taken by La Fayette and the great mass of "federates." Then the king repeated the oath aloud; banners were waved, sabres flashed in the air, and the whole vast crowd cried—"I swear it!" The queen, who was placed on a balcony near by, held up the Dauphin in her arms, as if he joined his father in the solemn promise. At this sight, shouts of the wildest joy broke from the assemblage. There was a delirium of gladness. If throats were not split, it was because throats are very strong. The golden age seemed to have come at last.

The festival lasted for several days, and was held in various places. Over the gate of the old place of the Bastille was a sign, "Dancing here." The great square was lighted with colored lamps, and in the midst was a pole sixty feet high, with a huge liberty-cap on the top. At one side was a dark pile of ruins lighted by a single lamp. If you went near enough you could see a confused mass of broken stones, and the corner of an iron cage; not much, but enough to show the change that one short year had brought about. The Bastille and Liberty! Who could have guessed that these names would ever be associated together?

After all this joyousness, what remained? All the old doubt and hatred, as strong as ever. A French historian calls it "a fête that had no morrow." Riots continued to take place in the provinces; Necker, hitherto the people's idol, found himself growing unpopular, and gave up his place for the last time. The great republican, Mirabeau, who was trusted by both king and nation, and whose influence might have prevented the horrors which came afterward, died a few months after the fête, and there was no one left to advise the king wisely, or moderate the madness of the people.

CHAPTER XXXI.

FROM THE FLIGHT OF THE KING TO HIS DEATH.—
1791-1793.



ACTING on the bad advice of his friends, Louis now took a step which forever killed the chance of reconciliation between himself and the nation, if indeed there ever had been any chance—he attempted to fly from the kingdom.

At first sight it seems as if this was just the thing that would have suited everybody, as it would have left those who disliked his government to form such a one as pleased them. But leaving his country meant also collecting an army abroad, which, together with the thousands of emigrants already beyond the borders, would invade France to establish his power again by force of arms.

He had already been negotiating secretly with various foreign princes, who were to furnish him with men and money, and by the efforts of faithful friends all arrangements were made for the flight of the royal party. But none of these people had any practical knowledge of life, and the whole expedition was nothing but a series of blunders. As much time was spent in preparing for the journey as if a pleasure party had been in view, and meanwhile the precious hours were slipping away. When at last all was ready, and the queen set out to meet her husband, who had preceded her, neither she nor the soldier who was to be her guide knew the way about Paris, and they wandered through the streets for an hour trying to find the carriage in which the king, nearly distracted, was waiting for them. And what a carriage! Instead of a commonplace vehicle which might have passed without notice, they had a large lumbering new coach, painted in bright colors, which could not fail to attract the attention of all passers-by. Count Fersen, a young Swedish officer, acted as coachman. Inside (when they all got together at last) were the governess, who was called the Baroness de Korff, and was to pass for a mother traveling with her children; the king dressed as a valet, the queen as a lady's maid, the Dauphin, the Princess Royal, and the king's sister, Madame Elizabeth, who was to represent the Baroness's traveling companion.

The great, shining coach, with couriers in yellow livery riding in front of it, and a smaller carriage behind to carry extras, had to stop several times for repairs, and actually traveled sixty-nine miles in twenty-two hours, when the inmates were flying for

their lives! During all this time it was a mark for every eye, and spies were sent to follow it. In spite of all their imprudence the party arrived safely at the village of St. Ménéhould, where the king repeated the folly he had often committed during the journey, and put his head out of the coach window to see what was detaining them. He was recognized by a young man named Drouet, a violent republican, who instantly jumped upon his horse and rode as fast as possible across the country to Varennes, which was the next station, warning the authorities there to be on the look-out for the king.

To his deep mortification, Louis was stopped here and forced to turn back, and a wretched journey which lasted during the whole week brought them again to Paris. Two deputies from the National Assembly rode back in the carriage with them, and they were constantly subjected to affronts which made their situation all the more painful. The king was now more strictly guarded than ever. Soldiers were stationed at the doors of the royal apartments, and it was with difficulty that the queen obtained leave to have the doors shut while dressing and undressing.

The Assembly, after a stormy debate, passed a decree excusing the king for his flight, but warning him that if he should repeat the attempt he would be dealt with as an enemy. It then declared its existence at an end, and a new election was held throughout France, at which none of the old members were allowed to be candidates. A new body of men, who called themselves the Legislative Assembly, were elected, and were in every way inferior to the old,

many of them being ignorant, coarse persons, of very little ability. They were soon divided into parties which struggled furiously for the mastery, one being for a constitutional monarchy, another for a republic, and still another desiring nothing so much as a general sweeping away of everything that had gone before them, and a reign of disorder and confusion.

The friends of monarchy outside of France were not idle. Armies were raised in Germany for the support of the king, to which the Assembly responded by declaring war against the Empire. Some fighting was done which was not favorable to France, and thinking that treachery on the part of the king and his friends must have brought about this result, a violent tumult took place at Paris. A great rabble assembled, armed with clubs, scythes, axes, and the unfailing pike, and carrying hideous emblems and mottoes, and rushed through the Hall of Assembly with a mad uproar. A calf's heart on the end of a pike was labelled "Heart of an aristocrat!" A pair of ragged breeches, borne aloft in the same way, bore the inscription: "The Sans-Culottes* are coming!" "Death to Tyrants!" "Liberty or Death!" and other threatening expressions blazed on their hastily-made banners. The mob next went to the Tuileries palace and forced its way up the grand staircase into the presence of the king, hurling out insults and threats as it passed along. One of the rioters handed the red cap (the

* "Sans-Culottes" was the name given to the most squalid and degraded class of the Parisians. It means literally "without breeches."

emblem of revolution, or, as they called it, of liberty), on the point of a pike, to the king. He put it on at once, and the queen appeared with an enormous tri-colored cockade in her hair. The crowd swarmed on through the noble halls of the old palace, screaming out their howls for liberty and curses on tyrants. After some hours of this horrible rioting the mayor made his tardy appearance, and with honied words persuaded the mob to disperse.

The noble courage which the royal family had displayed during this trying scene was turning the tide of popular feeling in their favor, when, unfortunately, just at this time the Duke of Brunswick, who was in command of the armies allied against France, issued an insolent and irritating proclamation in which he commanded the French nation instantly to return to their allegiance, threatening to sack the city of Paris if the smallest injury were done to the king or his family. This ill-judged action was like a spark applied to gunpowder; the violent party, who were called Jacobins, were beside themselves with rage, and demanded from the Assembly the instant trial and deposition of the king.

The more moderate members having voted down this proposition, the Jacobins, led by the fierce Danton, determined to carry out their wishes by force. On the tenth of August, 1792, a desperate mob thronged the streets leading to the palace of the Tuileries. This they surrounded, bringing cannon to bear upon it from all directions, and a large proportion of the National Guard placed there for the defence of the palace having joined the roiteurs, Louis

thought it necessary to give up any attempt at resistance. His faithful Swiss Guards were with him, ready to lay down their lives in defending him, and several hundred gentlemen who had formed part of his court in happier days crowded about him, eager to be of service, but their good wishes could avail little in the face of the infuriated mob. In the midst of the excitement, a message was brought from the Assembly offering to take the royal family under its protection. "I would rather be nailed to the palace walls than leave them!" exclaimed the indignant queen; but her husband dreaded the sacrifice of life that must follow if they stayed, and decided to accept the invitation. With great difficulty he and his family forced their way through the crowd, attended by his friends, and leaving the Swiss Guard on duty at the palace. The king entered the Hall of Assembly with great dignity. "Gentlemen," said he, "I have come to prevent the commission of a great crime." The royal party were placed in the reporter's box behind the president's chair, a closet six feet square and eight feet high, into which the burning rays of an August sun poured their splendor. For fourteen hours they were packed in this miserable place, listening to the wild harangues of the Jacobin orators, and the furious outcries which resounded through the streets. They were scarcely seated when the sound of cannon from the Tuileries showed that the fight had begun. Louis, always anxious to stop the shedding of blood, sent word to the Swiss Guards to cease firing; by some mistake the order was not given to the whole regiment, and while a part of them marched out, some three

hundred remained at their posts in the palace and were cut to pieces by the mob. Not one escaped. The Tuileries was sacked and plundered by the frenzied rabble, who murdered every human being found within its limits. The gentlemen-ushers, the valets, the pages, the door-keepers, the very cooks and scullions, were hacked to pieces and their bodies stripped and mutilated. Streams of blood ran through the palace; women mingled with men in the indiscriminate massacre, and cut strips of flesh from the dead bodies, which they held up with yells of triumph; one could not go from room to room except by treading on the slain. Every corner of the palace was ransacked, bureaux and desks were broken open, the contents of the cellars turned out, furniture and works of art hurled from the windows or chopped to pieces inside; and finally the mad, drunken wretches began to fall upon one another, not knowing what they did, and their corpses were mingled with those of the defenders of the palace, in one vast heap of dead.

After two or three days of suspense the king and his family were sent to a gloomy fortress called the Temple, which had been taken from the old Knights Templars by Philip the Fair. Here it would seem as if the malice of their enemies might at least have allowed them the ordinary comforts of life, as they were strongly guarded and could do no harm, but they were treated with the utmost severity. The soldiers who guarded them took pleasure in insulting them, and they could not stir out of their rooms without being exposed to brutal affronts. They accepted their situation with great dignity and courage, and the

queen, as long as she was allowed to do so, went on regularly with her children's education.

Meanwhile the government was busily employed in driving out of France the allied armies who presumed to invade her soil. The latter at first had some successes, which terrified the revolutionists, and they resolved upon a horrible plan by which to get rid of those at home who were unfavorable to them. All persons suspected of being royalists were arrested and placed in confinement, until every prison in Paris was crowded with them; then ruffians were hired by the Commune to murder them all. In order that as many citizens as possible might enjoy the spectacle, seats were placed in the prison yards, some labelled "for gentlemen," others "for ladies." Then the work of death began. A mock-court was held within the walls; each prisoner was called up in turn and sentenced after a short examination, with or without proof; then they were thrust through a small gate into the courtyard, where they were instantly hacked to pieces by the assassins.

For four days this hideous work went on, until the prisons were emptied and there were no more victims to be put to death. The beautiful Princess de Lamballe, the most intimate friend of Marie Antoinette, was murdered with savage cruelty, and her bleeding head held up on a pike before the queen's window in the Temple. Such horrible crimes were committed as the pen refuses to record; it was a carnival of blood and outrage. Among the first victims were a great company of priests, who were peculiarly the objects of public hatred. The venerable archbishop of Arles

was killed on the steps of the altar. The stories of what occurred during those days of horror fill volumes, and yet but a small part has been written down. One young lady, when her father was sentenced to death, threw herself passionately between him and the assassins, begging for his life. One of them filled a cup with freshly flowing blood, exclaiming: "This is the blood of an aristocrat. Drink it, and we will let him go." Without a moment's hesitation she drained the cup, and the applauding crowd permitted her and her father to pass out in safety. The butchers were sustained at their work by frequent draughts of wine, and at its close received the thanks of their employers.

The operations of the army were extremely creditable. The republican general, Dumouriez, gained the victories of Valmy and Jemappes, and raised the spirits of the Assembly so much that they published a vainglorious letter offering their assistance to all nations who might wish to free themselves from the tyranny of their rulers; and growing bolder as they went on, they soon proclaimed that wherever the French armies went, monarchy should be at an end, old distinctions abolished and the property of nobles and priests confiscated. Their insolence kept pace with their success.

In one of the previous battles, La Fayette, who remained faithful to that part of the Assembly still acknowledging the king, was on that account deserted by his troops and went over to the Austrian camp for safety. Instead of receiving him hospitably, as a person who had done every thing he could for the royal family in whose cause they were fighting, the

Austrians kept him as a prisoner, and for five years he was confined in a loathsome dungeon. He was not released until after the peace of Campo Formio, in 1798.

The next change in the varying government of France was the assembling of a National Convention, of which a large proportion of the members were committed beforehand to the destruction of the king. On the first day of their meeting they voted that royalty was abolished, and that any emigrants who should return to France or be taken in battle should be put to death. All titles of nobility were suppressed, and even the ordinary forms of courtesy were to be done away with. It was forbidden to say *Monsieur* or *Madame*, and every one, high or low, must be addressed as "Citizen."

Two opposite parties existed in the Convention, one consisting of the moderate members, called Girondists, and the other composed of the Jacobins and other turbulent and bloodthirsty persons who took the name of Mountaineers, from the places they occupied in the Assembly-hall. These last were representatives of the worst class of the community, and being led by Danton, Marat and Robespierre, men of ability without conscience, soon awed the Girondists into submission. The king, or, as the accusation called him, Louis Capet, was brought to trial before the Convention. "Sit down, Louis," said the president, Barrère, "and answer the questions that shall be put to you." He was accused of misgovernment and of secret correspondence with the enemies of France. He replied with great moderation, calmness and good sense; but his cause was judged beforehand, and after a violent

discussion which lasted three days, he was declared guilty and sentenced to death.

This was not done without a desperate struggle. Even after the death-sentence was passed there were many who voted for delay, but the tiger-element carried the day, and Louis was told that in twenty-four hours he must die. Even his own blood-relation, the Duke of Orleans—no Duke now, but “Philippe Egalité,” (Equality—that being the new name he had adopted), voted for death without delay. A miserable wretch, this, who hoped to rise to power over his kinsman’s grave; to be disappointed, we shall be glad to learn, when his turn comes.

The execution took place on the 21st of January, 1793. Louis, who had been for some time separated from his family, was now allowed to take leave of them. After this melancholy farewell the king slept soundly. In the morning his confessor came to him; he received the sacrament, and remained at his devotions until he was told, “the hour is come.” He was taken in a carriage through the silent streets, where one universal feeling of awe pervaded all hearts. Shops were shut, windows down, all business suspended. No voice dared to utter a word of sympathy, but a heavy shadow rested upon the city. When he arrived at the place where the guillotine stood waiting for him, the drums began to beat. “Silence!” he exclaimed angrily, turning towards them. They stopped, and he advanced to the edge of the scaffold, and, addressing the vast crowd assembled there, said, “Frenchmen, I die innocent. I pardon my enemies, and I pray that France——” Here the brutal official

who had charge of the execution, ordered the drums to beat, and the rest of the speech was not heard. When the officers began to bind his arms he resisted, wishing to be spared that last indignity; his confessor, who had remained with him, reminded him that in submitting to this he was only suffering as our Saviour had done, and he yielded. "Son of St. Louis, ascend to heaven!" said the abbé; the axe fell; the head rolled in the dust. The executioner picked it up by the hair and held it up before the people, who answered by shouts of "Long live the Republic!" The remains were hastily buried in the spot where the beautiful church of the Madeleine now stands, and a quantity of quicklime was thrown into the grave, that they might be destroyed as soon as possible.

Thus perished Louis the Sixteenth, in the thirty-ninth year of his age; sacrificed, not so much on account of his own sins as for those of his ancestors, who by long centuries of cruel tyranny had nourished the terrible dragon that now devoured him. He had wished to do what was right, but he did not know how; and like an unskillful engineer with a vast responsibility suddenly thrown upon him, he fell a victim to the power he could not control.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE REIGN OF TERROR—1793-1794.



HERE is no retreat now," said Marat, one of the most rabid of the Red Republicans; "we must conquer or die." In a few weeks the Republic was in arms against nearly the whole of Europe, England joining the great confederacy. Formidable insurrections broke out in France itself; General Dumouriez, who had before fought successfully, lost the battle of Neerwinden, and was so disgusted with the turn affairs had taken that he went over to the Austrians. It was now that the wonderful energy of the Jacobins prevailed against this combination of adverse forces. Launching their whole strength in a wild fury against the enemies nearest them, those at home, they stopped at no act of violence which could make their hold on power firmer. They established the Revolutionary Tribunal, one of the most horrible blood-councils which ever disgraced a civilized nation, and turned its fury first on the Girondists, whom they charged with being enemies of the public interests. These were hunted down without mercy, in Paris, in the provinces, everywhere; the prisons were crowded. Hoping to deliver her country from this detestable tyranny, a young lady named Charlotte Corday obtained admission to the presence of the ferocious Marat, and stabbed him to the heart. She was condemned to death, and met her sentence triumphantly—glorying in having rid her country of a tyrant, and not knowing how

fruitless had been her efforts in the cause of freedom.

A terrible vengeance was taken on those parts of the country which had risen in rebellion. Tribunals were erected in every city in these unhappy districts, and blood flowed in a ceaseless stream. When it was found impossible for the most industrious guillotine to dispose in a day of all the condemned, shorter methods were adopted. At Lyons the prisoners by hundreds at a time were taken to a long mound raised between two ditches dug to receive their bodies, and there fired upon with cannon. The first discharge did not kill them all; it only broke jaws and sent limbs flying over the field; there was a second, and a third, and as many persons still lived on in their agony, the bayonet and the sabre did the rest. Then the bodies (some breathing ones among them), were shoveled into the ditches and the earth heaped above them. These executions were called *fusillades*. Another kind, called *noyades*, consisted in filling the hold of a vessel with as many poor wretches as it would contain, towing it out into a river and then scuttling it so that all should be drowned together. What was termed a "republican marriage" was tying a man and woman together and throwing them into the water to drown. No fewer than fifteen thousand persons are computed to have perished in these various ways in three months in the city of Nantes alone, and the waters of the Loire became so polluted by corpses that it was forbidden to drink them as being injurious to health.

Among the cities which rebelled was that of Toulon, in the south of France, whose inhabitants called in an

English fleet and garrison to help them. Here for the first time we are told of a young officer called Napoleon Bonaparte, whose skillful military operations compelled the British to retreat. France and the world were destined to hear much more of him before the grave closed over him at St. Helena.

After the death of Marat, Robespierre became the chief of the revolutionists, and from this time may be dated the beginning of the "Reign of Terror." A series of hastily-formed laws made by the so-called "Committee of Public Safety," placed the lives and possessions of the entire French nation at the mercy of a band of men who for lawlessness and ferocity have never been equalled in the civilized world. "Enemy of the Republic" was the vague accusation on which thousands upon thousands of good citizens were thrown into prison, only to be subjected to the mockery of a trial and then hurried to a speedy death. Among the early victims we distinguish "the Widow Capet"—such was the name given at her trial to the once beautiful and haughty daughter of Maria Theresa. For months her life had been as wretched as the ingenuity of vulgar souls could make it. A few months after the king's death she was forcibly separated from her little son, the care of whom had been a great comfort to her. From that time she seemed to lose all hope and spirit, and would stand for hours together looking through a crack in the wall, for the sake of sometimes seeing him pass at a distance.

Soon she was denied even this poor satisfaction, and was removed from the Temple, where Madame Elizabeth and the Princess Royal had been with her, to the

still more wretched prison of the Conciergerie, a place used only for the lowest criminals. The men appointed to take her there came in the middle of the night and obliged her to rise and dress in their presence, searching her apparel as she put it on, to see that she concealed nothing. In passing through a low door-way she struck her forehead violently, and one of the men asked if she had hurt herself. "Nothing can hurt me now," she said.

In the Conciergerie she was placed in a damp, filthy cell, in which a man was stationed, night and day, to watch her. She was never left alone for a moment. The princesses, knowing her industrious habits, wished to send her materials for worsted-work, that she might have something to pass away the dreary time, but were harshly refused, on the ground that there might be some treasonable communication between them and her. She managed, however, to ravel out some old carpet which she found in her cell, and with two bits of wood for knitting needles, (as she was not allowed steel needles for fear she should stab herself with them), she contrived to knit a pair of garters.

At last the time was appointed for her trial, and for two days she was subjected to a rigid examination during which the most insulting questions were asked her, all of which she answered with spirit and dignity. The verdict was, of course, death, and so great had been her suffering that she welcomed it as a relief. She was carried on a cart to the place of the guillotine with her hands tied, like a common criminal; her beautiful hair had turned white in her long agony; her face, now no longer lovely, but worn and haggard,

could scarcely have been recognized by one who knew it only in happier days, but her bearing was, as always, proud and dignified. She mounted the scaffold with a firm step; stretching out her hands, she exclaimed, "Farewell, my children; I am going to your father;" the axe fell; the executioner held up the bleeding head amid shouts of "*Vive la République*," and all was over.

To the eyes of republican France she was only one of many. The guillotine never rested. Twelve prisons in Paris, and thousands more throughout the country, delivered up their captives to death as fast as they could be emptied by the executions. The Girondist deputies of the Convention, who had been in prison since the beginning of the Reign of Terror, were condemned in a body, and marched together to execution singing the *Marsellaise Hymn*, which had been composed not long before by Rouget de Lisle. Madame Roland, one of the most distinguished of French thinkers and writers, exclaimed as she was carried to the guillotine, "Oh, Liberty! what crimes are committed in thy name!" Her husband, who was not among the "suspected," stabbed himself on hearing of her death. The infamous "*Philippe Egalité*," once Duke of Orleans, who had shocked even the revolutionists by voting for the king's death; Bailly, the astronomer, first President of the National Assembly; the Countess Du Barry, a shameful relic of the reign of Louis the Fifteenth; Malesherbes, the upright minister of the next Louis, and who had volunteered to defend him at his trial; the saint-like Madame Elizabeth, the king's sister—all followed in quick succession, almost unnoticed among the throng who

daily formed a mournful procession to the scaffold.

It was not in the name of the Christian religion that such things were done. The Revolutionists had advanced beyond that. The last person who was allowed to have a priest with him was the king, though once or twice afterward a clergyman was seen in the company of a condemned person, causing angry complaints among the spectators. The Convention now decided that such follies should be done away with altogether. They proclaimed that the religion of Jesus Christ was abolished and that death was an eternal sleep; churches were everywhere desecrated; the tombs in the cathedral of St. Denis, that resting-place of so many generations of French kings, were broken open and their contents exposed to the insults of the multitude. All Christian worship was forbidden, and a festival was held in the ancient cathedral of Notre Dame in which an operadancer was enthroned with revolting ceremonies, as the Goddess of Reason. To wipe out as far as possible all remembrance of times gone by, the calendar was changed and a new reckoning was ordered to begin from the 22d of September, 1792, which took the name of the year I. Instead of weeks of seven days, the months were divided into three periods of ten days each, every "décadi" or tenth day being a holiday to replace the Christian day of rest. The months received different names—Windy-month, Rainy-month, Snowy-month, etc., and such is the power of habit that these absurd decrees remained in force until the first of January, 1806.

The ferocity of the ruffians who despoiled the church

of St. Denis almost exceeds belief. Even the coffin of Henry the Fourth, so long the nation's idol, was not spared. His body, of which the features were perfectly preserved, was placed upright on a stone for the rabble to amuse themselves with, and a woman, reproaching it with having been a king, knocked it down by a blow in the face. The contents of all the vaults were thrown in a heap into great pits containing quick lime, which were then filled up, while the leaden coffins were melted and cast into bullets intended to kill the enemies of the Republic.

The rage for condemnation now became a sort of insanity. Fouquier-Tinville, a man whose greatest delight was in the shedding of blood, was made public prosecutor. A word, a tear, often a look, was enough to render a person "suspected," and once within the prison walls there was little hope. "Plots in the prison" was now the watchword of the accusers, and it was a formula from which few escaped. The number of prisoners condemned in a day was called a "batch," as if they had been so many loaves of bread prepared for the oven.

The prisons themselves were disgusting places, dirty, damp and unwholesome, but the prisoners congregated in them had one comfort; they were allowed to be together. They were often left for weeks in these places before they were tried, and ladies and gentlemen who had met each other before in gay society had even the heart to play games in which a mock trial and a death by guillotine frequently figured!

Every day when the "batches" were called for, each prisoner listened eagerly for his own name, and not

hearing it returned again to the play which the summons had interrupted. Poor souls ! let us not grudge them these efforts at self-consolation. Others there were of nobler natures who spent their time in strengthening the weak, encouraging the timid, consoling the bereaved; and who, when their turn came to go, set such an example of noble resignation as lifted up the hearts of those left behind to their own level of unselfish patience.

Outside of the prisons, the habit of witnessing executions had an unspeakably brutalizing effect on the common people. The daily murder became a festival, where seats were prepared as in a theatre. Women took their knitting and went several hours beforehand to secure the best places, exchanging jokes and congratulations while the hideous spectacle was going on. The higher classes, as a rule, met death with firmness and dignity, and in silence. Those not yet "suspected" lived in continual terror, none knowing when the axe would be lifted over their heads. The sight of a strange face in their houses, the sound of a bell or of an unknown voice filled them with alarm. Many committed suicide in their wretchedness, unable to endure the suspense.

All parties in the convention were not yet, however, subdued to Robespierre's will, and he caused Danton, Camille Desmoulins and others who still preserved their independence, to be guillotined. The pride of Robespierre was now at its height. Resistance to his will had ceased, but the work of death went on more ferociously than ever. It seemed as if he felt his only chance of safety to be in the ceaseless shedding of

blood. With much pompous formality he re-established the worship of a Supreme Being about a year after the enthronement of the Goddess of Reason, and a festival was held on the occasion, in which Robespierre himself was plainly intended to be the one honored. But he had at last overstepped the bounds of patience, and his ruin was resolved upon.


All arrangements were made in the deepest secrecy, and the tyrant was thunderstruck when he found himself suddenly denounced before the Convention as one whose death was necessary to the safety of the Republic. In vain he tried to make himself heard; too many of the members were in dread of his overgrown power, and he was quickly condemned, with all his trusted associates. He tried to shoot himself in prison, but only inflicted a hideous wound on his face, shattering the jaw. As he was carried to execution, lying on a cart and almost dead already with cringing terror, the people shouted for joy; women danced around him, curses and jeers followed him to the scaffold. There he was stretched out on the ground until his turn came, for he was too far gone to stand; his eyes opened and he saw the bloody axe; Samson, the executioner, roughly tore off his coat and with it the dirty linen bandage with which his broken jaw had been bound up; a frightful spectacle was exhibited, a horrible cry escaped from him, and soon his head was held up to the applauding crowd: Robespierre was no more.

The revolution which caused his downfall is called that of the 9th Thermidor, (July 28th 1794). For some time the revolutionary axe was kept at work on the miscreants who had been accomplices in his bloody

deeds, Fouquier-Tinville and such as he meeting the fate they had been dealing out to others. Figures do not help us much in estimating scenes like these, but it is said that fourteen hundred persons were executed in Paris alone during the six weeks preceding Robespierre's death. In the course of a few months ten thousand were released from the different prisons, and the Convention was mainly occupied in sentencing to death its own members, as each party in turn obtained the ascendancy. At length order was restored among them and they began to turn their attention to the affairs of the country.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE DIRECTORY. DAY OF THE SECTIONS.—1795.

HILE unspeakable horrors were taking place in France, the armies of the Republic were maintaining the honor of the country against the great European coalition with a bravery beyond praise. The absolute dictatorship of the Convention enabled it to pour out enormous numbers of men for the service, and as nobility was not a qualification for promotion as it had been before the Revolution, every man felt that his rising from the ranks depended on himself alone, and fought accordingly. Under Generals Pichegru, Jourdan and Hoche, the French armies were repeatedly successful, and Holland, the first fruits of the new policy, was conquered and turned

into a Republic. The campaign in this country presented the remarkable spectacle of the capture of a fleet by a land-force, the Dutch ships being frozen into the river Waal, and falling an easy prey to the French infantry. Conquests were made from Spain and Prussia, and these powers were the first among the great European nations to consent to terms of peace and acknowledge the independence of the new Republic.

By sea the French were not so fortunate. Lord Howe won a great naval victory over them off Ushant, and they had to give up their part of St. Domingo in the West Indies to Spain, while Corsica, helped by England, set itself free again.

One of the conditions demanded by Spain before signing the treaty of peace was that the unhappy children of Louis the Sixteenth should be delivered up to their natural protectors, the royal family of Austria. The Convention hesitated about consenting to this article, and while the negotiations were still pending, the prince died. The sad story of this poor boy's life, then imperfectly known or only guessed at, was afterwards revealed by the accounts of his sister, who had been imprisoned with him, and of others who were witnesses of his fate. A course of systematic cruelty at last destroyed both his mind and body, and he died in June, 1795. His sister was then restored to her friends in Austria, and subsequently married her cousin, the Duke d' Angoulême; but the remembrance of the dreadful scenes of her youth never faded from her mind, and she remained always melancholy and unhappy.

Successful in arms abroad, France was no less so in repressing insurrections at home. In La Vendée a revolt broke out which cost on both sides a hundred thousand lives; but in the end it was put down. The Royal party in Brittany, under the name of *Chouans*, (night-owls), for a long time kept up a desperate struggle, with the same result. Unsparing severity was used towards the vanquished, and the stories of want and desolation which followed are pitiful to read.

The whole country was in a state of great financial distress. The millions of confiscated property did not go to the support of the poor, but to keep up the enormous armies with which France was holding her enemies at bay, and the number of men drawn away by war from trade and agriculture caused serious loss to both. Government employment was of all things most dreaded, for the payment, being made in the wretched *assignats* which were daily decreasing in value, was so inadequate that men resigned their offices rather than give their labor for what would not support them. Most vexatious and arbitrary laws had been passed in the days of the terror, regulating not only the price of merchandise but even the quantity to be bought, so that the population of Paris could not buy bread at the baker's without first procuring tickets from the authorities. The cry of "Bread! Bread!" became the terror of the government, and it was a continual problem with the Convention how to content the people and yet keep its own hold on power.

The experiment of uniting in one body all the classes which had formerly composed the States-General was considered to have failed. It was resolved

that the National Legislature should consist of two bodies—a Council of Five Hundred which was to propose the laws, and a Council of Ancients, (so called because no one could serve in it who was less than forty years old), to discuss them, and either accept or reject them. The power of carrying them out was to be in the hands of five persons called a Directory. So far all were agreed, but when the Convention added a condition that two-thirds of the council should be appointed from its own members, a violent opposition was aroused, instigated by the Royalists, who had no mind thus to see the Revolutionary government perpetuate itself, and hoped gradually to gain a voice in public affairs.

Preparations were made for resisting the decree by force, and several of the “sections,” of Paris, (a division corresponding somewhat to the “wards” of our own cities, but with a certain amount of independent action), were gained over by the Royalists. The plan was submitted to a vote by the people of the whole country and accepted by an immense majority, but the rebellious sections had no thought of yielding. In this emergency the command of an armed force to quell the insurgents was given to that same young lieutenant named Bonaparte who had done good service in driving away the English from Toulon. He was appointed to conduct the operations against the sections, and made his arrangements with such skill and promptness that when the expected rising of the people occurred, he was completely victorious. This success, which took place on what is called “The Day of the Sections,” raised Bonaparte to the highest

place in public esteem, and he was soon afterwards named Commander-in-chief. From this time until the battle of Waterloo the interest of French history centres about this remarkable man, all the actions of others seeming insignificant by the side of his brilliant military career.

The Convention showed great moderation and clemency in its victory over the Sections; only one man was put to death and a few imprisoned. A general pardon was issued to all who had been convicted for political offences, except those already sentenced to transportation, and the prison doors were thrown open; but the emigrants who had fled from their country to save their lives in the beginning of the Revolution were especially excluded from this amnesty. The Convention could not forgive this act of desertion. Belgium, which had been conquered by the armies of the Republic, was declared to be annexed to France. The "Place de la Révolution,"—the spot where the guillotine had shed the blood of thousands,—was thenceforth to be called the "Place de la Concorde," which name it still bears. When these decrees had been passed, the president pronounced the words "The National Convention declares that its mission has been accomplished and its session is closed," and the assembly broke up amid shouts of "Vive la République!" on the 26th of October, 1795.

An immense majority of the people of France still preferred the Republic, in spite of all its horrors and its follies, to the long tyranny which had preceded it. The five members of the Directory were all Republicans, and had voted for the death of the king. Two

of them, Barras and Carnot, were men of ability and experience; the names of the others need not be remembered. The Luxembourg palace was assigned to them for their meetings, but so universal had been the destruction that when they went there to enter upon their duties there was not a piece of furniture to be found in the building. They borrowed a wooden table which was hobbling upon three legs, the fourth having tumbled out from old age; and this with some chairs, also borrowed, completed their outfit. They were not discouraged, however, but then and there determined boldly to meet every obstacle and rescue their country from its depth of misery.

From this discouraging state of affairs at home, the mind of the French could soon turn with pleasure to the glorious spectacle of Bonaparte's successes in foreign countries. From the moment of his assuming the command of the army, its path was one steady career of victory. The soldiers under his command were in a wretched state of distress and insubordination, occasioned by the want of proper provisions and clothing, but his animating spirit prevailed over all discouragements, and his efficient measures brought order out of confusion. His men forgot that they were hungry and cold and weary while he was leading them on to glory. To the end of his life, those who were accustomed to personal contact with him regarded him (unless they happened to quarrel) with an affection little short of idolatry.

Bonaparte was, as we know, a Corsican. From his earliest years he loved nothing so well as playing soldier, and inspired all his companions with the same

spirit. At ten years old he was sent to the military school at Brienne, in France, where he received a thorough military education. The following is the certificate given him at fifteen years of age, and copied afterwards by one of his classmates:

“M. de Buonaparte,* born Aug. 15, 1759, height 4 feet 10 inches, has finished his fourth course; of good constitution, excellent health, of submissive disposition, upright, grateful, and strictly regular in conduct; has always been distinguished for application to the mathematics. He is tolerably well acquainted with history and geography. He is rather deficient in the ornamental branches and in Latin, in which he has barely completed the fourth course. He will make an excellent seaman. He is fit to pass to the military school at Paris.”


It must have been hard for Bonaparte ever to have kept up the appearance of a “submissive disposition,” for his whole character, as shown during his life, bears the marks of an overpowering arrogance and self-will. He graduated with honor from the school at Paris, and received a commission as sub-lieutenant in the army, but had no opportunity to distinguish himself until he drove away the British from Toulon in 1793. During this time he was very poor, and being at the same time very proud, he became somewhat misanthropic, and inclined to look on the world as a very disagreeable place; but this ceased as soon as he had any opportunity of employing his ever restless and

*His family name was thus spelt. He left out the *n* during his first campaign in Italy, to make the spelling correspond with the French pronunciation.

active mind. After the Day of the Sections he was frequently obliged to quell the disturbances which were everywhere taking place. He was at that time twenty-six years old. He is said to have been then extremely thin, and of a dark, sallow complexion. As he was one day haranguing the crowd on the folly of their course, a corpulent woman screamed out, "Never mind what these smartly-dressed officers say; so long as they get fat, they don't care who is starved." Bonaparte turned toward her and instantly replied, "Look at me, my good woman, and then tell me which of us two is the fatter." The crowd burst into a roar of laughter, and dispersed. A few days after the affair of the Sections a young lad of ten years old came to Bonaparte to implore that the sword of his father, Viscount Beauharnais, who had been guillotined during the Reign of Terror, might be restored to him. Touched by the little lad's tears and supplications, the general ordered that the sword should be given up to him. The mother of the boy, a beautiful young widow, called on Bonaparte to thank him for the favor, and this acquaintance led to a marriage between them, so in the course of a few months Josephine Beauharnais became Madame Bonaparte. The widow had two children; Eugene, the boy already mentioned, and a daughter called Hortense, who afterward married one of Napoleon's brothers.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

BONAPARTE'S FIRST CAMPAIGNS.—1796–1799.

HE Republic, as will be remembered, was still at war with the Austrians, who had a large army in the northern part of Italy. With a force numbering scarcely more than half of theirs, Bonaparte marched against them in 1796, and by a series of most brilliant military operations, defeated them at all points. It does not accord with the plan of this slight sketch to give the particulars of this wonderful campaign. It was a succession of surprises to the enemy, who never knew where the next blow would fall, so rapid were the movements of Bonaparte and so unexpected his combinations. The names of the great battles at Lodi, Arcole and Rivoli—all glorious victories—are all we have space for here. It was after the first of these that the soldiers bestowed on him the nickname of “the little Corporal,” which clung to him through life.

Encouraged by these successes, Bonaparte determined to pursue the retreating army into its own territory, and had advanced to Leoben, seventy-five miles from Vienna, when the discomfited Austrians sent to beg for a suspension of arms. This was granted by the conqueror, who, after signing the preliminary articles of a peace, returned into Italy, which at that time was divided into various governments. Sardinia had its king, Lombardy was under the control of Austria, Venice still kept up a show of independence, the pope

reigned in the "States of the Church," the king of Naples had dominion over all Southern Italy, and various dukes and princes governed the remainder. As far as Bonaparte's victories extended he exacted contributions from all, and, not content with enormous demands in money, robbed the different sovereigns of their choicest works of art, the accumulations of centuries. Pictures, statuary, manuscripts—whatever was most valuable and most prized, — were taken to Paris, and for nearly twenty years adorned the galleries of the Luxembourg and the Louvre. France gained besides these the countries of Savoy and Nice, and the right to keep garrisons in many of the most important cities of Italy.

The helpless Pope, after being stripped of his possessions, even the jewels which formed part of his dress being taken from him, was removed from place to place, and finally taken to France, where he died. The ancient commonwealth of Venice, having risen against the garrisons left there by Bonaparte while he was marching into Germany, was seized by the French, and, after all its centuries of freedom, was turned over to Austria at the Treaty of Campo Formio, by which Bonaparte finally made peace. France was now confirmed in the possession of Belgium, together with the coveted "Rhine boundary," while a large portion of territory in Northern Italy, taken from several different states, was formed into a single one called the "Cisalpine Republic." It reads like a dream, this wonderful panorama of conquests made with a comparatively small number of men, and passing so rapidly that before the news of one success reached the ears

of the astonished nations, another had been gained. A French writer says of Bonaparte at this period that "these victories gave him the tone of a master, and he never laid it aside."

After the treaty of Campo Formio, Bonaparte returned to Paris, where he had a magnificent reception. He spent several months there very quietly with Josephine, devoting himself to study, and avoiding any appearance of wishing to attract attention. But he was revolving in his mind an idea which had long occupied it,—that of a military expedition to Egypt. The Directory did not embrace the plan very eagerly at first, but finally consented, as is said, chiefly that so dangerous a rival might be removed from their own vicinity.

Magnificent preparations were made for this great expedition, which included as a part of its equipment a large number of men of learning, or, as the French call them, *savans*. These were to make a study of the geography, natural history and antiquities of Egypt, and advance the cause of science in France as much as the men of war were to advance her military dominion. On the way, Bonaparte stopped and took possession of the Island of Malta, which was given up to him by the Knights of St. John, who had held it since it was bestowed upon them by Charles the Fifth in 1525.

The army landed in Egypt near Alexandria, and having taken that city with but little opposition, proceeded to Cairo. Although Egypt belonged nominally to the Sultan of Turkey and was ruled by a governor subject to him, the real enemies Bonaparte had to contend with there were the Mamelukes, who

were among the best soldiers in the world, and formed, with their officers, a kind of military despotism, Near Cairo was fought the Battle of the Pyramids, before which Bonaparte exclaimed to his soldiers, "Remember that from the summits of those pyramids forty centuries are looking down upon you!" The Mamelukes fought desperately, but were defeated with great loss, and Cairo with all the surrounding country fell into the hands of the French.

A great reverse of fortune followed this triumph. The fleet, which had been left in Aboukir Bay (among the mouths of the Nile) was attacked and destroyed by the English under Lord Nelson. This is the famous action called "The Battle of the Nile," in which the incident occurred known to our schoolboys by Mrs. Hemans's poem of "Casabianca." Thus cut off from all communication with his country, Bonaparte profited by his isolation to form new schemes of conquest. He organized a government for Egypt, and kept the natives in awe by merciless severity. The Sultan, encouraged by the triumph of the British, now declared war against France, and Bonaparte, not waiting to be attacked, marched into Syria with his army. Here he took the town of Jaffa by storm, and ordered two thousand Turkish prisoners to be murdered in cold blood. He then attacked Acre, and in the course of the siege inflicted a bloody defeat on the Turks at the foot of Mount Tabor; but the bravery of the garrison, aided by Sir Sydney Smith, who was in command of an English fleet in the harbor, checked him, and he was compelled to abandon Syria and return to Egypt.

His visions of a magnificent Oriental empire had faded into air, but the return through the desert was a terrible reality. The scorching heat of a Syrian summer, the intolerable thirst, (for there was no water to be had), and above all that dreadful disease called the plague, made the march a scene of frightful suffering. Many wounded soldiers were thrown on the sands to die, bitterly reproaching their comrades for their desertion. All villages that lay in their way and the rich crops waiting to be harvested were set on fire, apparently through very wantonness, for their destruction could do no good to the plague-stricken host, and no resistance was offered. At last the sadly-diminished army reached Egypt and were allowed to rest for a short time at Cairo. The Turks had in the meantime landed an army at Aboukir, which Bonaparte attacked and defeated with tremendous slaughter. Learning from the newspapers the confusion which prevailed in France under the Directory, he took the extraordinary resolution of abandoning his army and returning at once, without orders, to France. As a military commander he was of course under the direction of the authorities there, and under a strong government would have been liable to be court-martialed for such a disregard of duty; but he understood the situation, and determined to make himself master of it.

His preparations for leaving Egypt were made secretly, for he was doing a thing against all law and system. He left General Kleber in command of the "Army of the East," and gratified the soldiers by causing the names of the forty men who fell in the attack at Alexandria to be engraved on Pompey's Pillar,

in that city. The *savans* were, after all, those who reaped the most benefit from the unfruitful expedition to Egypt. They returned home with a great addition to their stock of scientific knowledge, and with a discovery which alone, to them, was worth the whole expedition. This was that of the famous Rosetta Stone, a monument of antiquity which, by presenting an inscription in the old Egyptian characters at the same time with a translation in Greek, has since enabled learned men to read the Egyptian records of remote ages. Bonaparte's foresight had not deceived him. His journey through France was one continued ovation, his countrymen recognizing instantly in him the master-spirit who alone could end the chaos which reigned there. Everywhere on the road complaints met him of the miserable inefficiency of the Directors. Anxious only to secure their own power, they had utterly neglected to provide for the prosperity of the nation. Threatened with a foreign invasion and groaning under tyrannical laws at home, civil war raging in many districts, the highways infested with robbers and unsafe for travelers, it is no wonder that the people of France complained bitterly of a government "without power, without justice and without morality." On the one hand there appeared before their eyes the prospect of another Reign of Terror, on the other, that of a return of the Bourbons. Either was to be dreaded, and they longed for security without tyranny, and liberty without anarchy.

"Their Five Majesties of the Directory," as the Directors were generally called, had found it hard work to hold their own. There had been revolutions and

counter-revolutions; at one time the Royalists had the majority in the Council of Five Hundred, at another the Jacobins, and as each party triumphed in turn, it undid all the work done by the other. Now we find the Count de Provence, (oldest brother of Louis the Sixteenth and heir to the throne), making arrangements to return; at another, the public exercise of the Christian religion is prohibited, and emigrants who were forbidden under the most severe penalties to depart from their native land, are forbidden to return.

Foreign nations had not been backward in taking advantage of the distracted state of affairs in France. The arrogance of the Directory caused a second combination to be made against it, and the French armies were repeatedly defeated in Italy. For a time Bonaparte kept still and watched the course of events, taking no part in public affairs, and even laying aside his general's uniform. He gathered his friends quietly about him, making sure of all beforehand. The Abbé Sieyès, a restless politician who had been prominent in the revolution of 1789, thought he had discovered just what the country needed; it was a head and a sword. He evidently flattered himself that his own was to be the head, and he was willing to accept Bonaparte as the sword. Between them they settled on a plan which brought about another revolution—this time, fortunately, effected without bloodshed.

Bonaparte was appointed to the command of the army in Paris. All things being prepared for the *coup d'état*,* he appeared before the Council of

*This term is one for which we have no equivalent in English. It means a sudden and unexpected political blow.

Five Hundred, who received him with angry reproaches, some of them even proposing to denounce him as a public enemy. For a moment he quailed before them; then, retiring, he sent in a file of grenadiers, who in a few minutes cleared the hall without firing. A small number of those members favorable to him were now brought together by his brother Lucien, who was president of the Council. These, in connection with the Council of Ancients, which was on his side, voted to abolish the Directory; a large number of the Five Hundred were condemned to banishment, and the chief power was given to Napoleon Bonaparte and two others, who were all elected for ten years, under the name of Consuls. A Tribune, a Legislative Chamber and a Senate were added, to give the government an appearance of being representative; but in fact all power was soon centred in the hands of Bonaparte as First Consul.

Thus peaceably was this great change effected. The people in general were so disgusted with the old government that when the matter was referred to their decision, the votes in favor of the new constitution proposed by Bonaparte and his colleagues were three millions against fifteen hundred. His splendid military achievements had dazzled their eyes, and they never asked whether his elevation to power would advance the cause of that freedom which they had been struggling so desperately for ten years to obtain. The immediate result hoped for was a rule of peace and order, and that being insured they asked nothing more. The coup d'état occurred on the 18th Brumaire, year VII. of the Republic, (November 9, 1799), and may be considered as the closing scene in the great French Revolution.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE CONSULATE.—1799–1804.



IT was easy to recognize the hand of a master as soon as Bonaparte took hold of the government. The churches were re-opened, the Christian Sunday again took the place of the heathenish "décadi," emigrants were welcomed home, great numbers of priests who had refused to take the oath to the "Constitution of the year III.," (1795), were released from the prisons where they had been languishing for years, highway robbery was stopped, and last but not least, the public credit revived and people were no longer afraid to trust the government.

Order was restored, but not liberty. The newspapers opposed to the First Consul were all suppressed, and a system of espionage, or spying, under the direction of the celebrated Fouché, minister of police, was established throughout the country. Everything was silently preparing for another great change, and events moved forward towards Bonaparte's assumption of supreme power as surely as the hands of a clock draw nearer the hour. He removed his residence from the Luxembourg palace, where the Directory had met, to the Tuileries. "To sleep in the Tuileries" had long been an object of his ambition, and he had the ancient palace fitted up with great splendor. Some artist of the Republic had painted divers liberty caps on the walls as part of the decoration. "Take away that rubbish," said the dictator

when he saw it; "I don't want any such stuff here." So the caps were painted out, as the thing they typified was soon to take its departure also.

The war with Austria, in spite of the treaty of Campo Formio, was recommenced in 1800 with great fury. Again Italy was the battle-ground, and her beautiful plains were once more trampled down by opposing armies. Bonaparte, having engaged two divisions of the Austrian army at a great distance apart, formed the resolution of crossing the Alps by difficult and dangerous passes, and appearing just where he was least expected. The exertions made in carrying out this bold design were almost superhuman. Not only men but cannon, baggage and ammunition had to be carried over nearly impassable mountains. The genius of the general and the endurance of his army overcame every obstacle. The cannon were placed in hollow logs and dragged over the precipitous roads by men harnessed to them like horses, a hundred to each piece. The men shouted and sang as they marched, and when an unusually hard place was to be passed the trumpet sounded a charge, as if they were rushing into battle. The gun-carriages were taken to pieces and carried on the backs of mules. In spite of a thousand dangers the passage was safely accomplished, and the French army, arriving at Milan, took possession of that city without opposition.

The Austrian general would not believe the report that Bonaparte had actually crossed the Alps with an army. Such a thing had never been heard of since the days of Hannibal; in fact, it was "impossible." Bonaparte and his army were there, nevertheless, and

the desperate battle of Marengo, near Milan, resulted once more in the success of the French, though they but narrowly escaped a defeat, and the brave General Desaix was slain. Many fortresses were given up by the enemy, an armistice was agreed upon until terms of peace could be settled, and Bonaparte returned to Paris to receive the laurels which he had so well earned. A few months after this General Moreau attacked the Austrians in their own territory and won the battle of Hohenlinden, scarcely less glorious than that of Marengo. They were now quite ready to conclude a peace, and the Treaty of Lunéville which followed was nearly a repetition of that of Campo Formio.

Great Britain was still carrying on the war. An expedition was sent out which took possession of Malta and proceeded to Egypt. General Kleber, who was left in command there by Bonaparte, had been assassinated on the day of the battle of Marengo, and his place was taken by General Menou—a very absurd person, who adopted the Mahometan religion and married a Turkish wife. This officer was not able to resist the English under Sir Ralph Abercromby, and agreed to abandon Egypt altogether.

The great English statesman, William Pitt, had always been bitterly opposed to making peace with Bonaparte. He was terribly grieved by the continual successes of the young conqueror; it is said that when he heard of the victory at Marengo, he exclaimed in despair, "Fold up the map of Europe for the next twenty years." But both sides were tired of war, as well they might be. Mr. Pitt retired from office, and a treaty was signed at Amiens in 1802, which left the relations

of France and England very much as they had been before the war began. In the same year Napoleon Bonaparte was made Consul for life. Step by step he was nearing the summit of power and grandeur. It was now that this wonderful man had an opportunity of showing that he was no less great in peace than in war. Nothing escaped his far-reaching mind. Manufactures, commerce, education, arts and sciences, public works which are to this day the wonder of travelers and the pride of France, institutions of learning, museums, libraries, all occupied his attention and sprang into life and prospered under his auspices. The Roman Catholic religion was declared to be the religion of the French people, and the government bound itself to make provision for the clergy. An Order of Merit called the Legion of Honor was founded to reward people who had served the state well, whether as soldiers or in their civil capacity. From this none were to be excluded on account of low birth; thus emulation was excited, and honor conferred where honor was due.

In one instance his usual discrimination failed him. Robert Fulton presented to his notice an invention for using steam in propelling boats against the stream, but Bonaparte, having a prejudice (perhaps founded on experience) against inventors, refused to listen to him. A few years later, America gave the welcome which France had refused, and the first steamboat sailed up the Hudson River.

The most striking achievement in this reorganization was the institution of the great system of civil law, which is still the one prevailing in France. The

"Code Napoléon" is the admiration of lawyers and judges in other countries; and now, after all the great soldier's military conquests have passed away, remains his most honorable and enduring monument. The system under the monarchy had been very complicated and various. A great writer says that a man traveling through France changed laws oftener than he changed horses. There were at least three hundred separate systems. All these were superseded by the one strong, consistent, harmonious "Code" instituted under Bonaparte's orders and supervision, by a commission composed of the best lawyers of the land.

Napoleon Bonaparte now held the proudest position occupied by any man in the world. The splendor of his military genius caused his name to ring from one end of Europe to the other, and the excellence of his government at home, arbitrary though it was, filled the hearts of his countrymen with love and respect for him. Could he have been content with such universal homage he might have made of France what he would; but ambition still led him on to acts of aggression, until in self-defence the other nations of Europe banded together, not so much against France, as against her great captain.

Several countries in Italy were annexed to France, and others remodeled into republics, of which Bonaparte had the control, though, in some cases he professed to leave the administration in the hands of a native ruler. One would think his mission on earth had been to establish republics. Besides those in Italy, he interfered with the Swiss, who had for hundreds of years maintained their independence, and

compelled them to accept a constitution of his own selection, and to become the "Helvetic Republic." His single piece of ill-luck during these triumphant years was the loss of the colony of San Domingo, in the West Indies, where the black population rebelled against their French masters and succeeded, with some help from England, in gaining their freedom. Their leader, Toussaint l'Ouverture, was a very remarkable person, according to some accounts not unlike Washington in character, but he was taken prisoner and carried to France, where he died. Bonaparte would probably have reduced the rebels to submission but for a frightful pestilence which broke out in the island and carried off great numbers of French soldiers, among them General Leclerc, who had married Napoleon's sister, Pauline.

Almost as soon as the treaty of peace with England was signed at Amiens the two nations began their old disputes, and in little more than a year they were at war again. Malta was the principal bone of contention, Great Britain not having evacuated it according to the terms of the treaty. Each nation now taxed its ingenuity to discover what would do most harm to its opponent. Without giving notice, England seized all French vessels in her own harbors, inflicting an enormous loss on the French; Bonaparte arrested all British subjects traveling in France and held them as prisoners. For years these unfortunate people, who had crossed the Channel in great numbers after the peace, were cut off from their friends and relatives, and were in a worse position than ordinary prisoners of war, because they could not be exchanged. The

war was not confined to these bloodless demonstrations. The French army under General Mortier conquered Hanover, then belonging to the English crown and which the dictator presented to Prussia some time afterward; and General Saint Cyr took possession of several ports in the kingdom of Naples. But the grand project was an invasion of England, in which Bonaparte hoped to re-enact the part of William the Conqueror. Immense preparations were made, to which the whole English nation responded with proportionate plans for defence, all England being aroused to such patriotic fervor as had never before been witnessed.

Bonaparte was not without enemies at home. Some years before, an "infernal machine" was prepared by the Royalists for his destruction. It consisted of a barrel of powder with a lighted slow-match attached, loaded on a cart which was placed in a street through which the Consul must pass on his way to the opera. Bonaparte's carriage passed, then Josephine's, and then the explosion took place, not more than a few seconds too late to effect the purpose for which it was designed. The glass in the second carriage was shattered; fifty-two persons were killed or wounded; but Bonaparte was uninjured, and went on and appeared at the opera as if nothing had happened.

A more wide-spread conspiracy was organized by General Pichegru and a *Chouan* named Cadoudal, having for its object the assassination of Bonaparte. General Moreau, who won the battle of Hohenlinden, was also implicated, but as it was proved that he refused to have anything to do with murder, he was only

banished from the country. Cadoudal and ten of his fellow-conspirators were executed; Pichegru committed suicide in prison.

In connection with these events a crime was committed which must forever darken the name of Napoleon. The Duke of Enghien, a descendant of the great Condé, was accused of having been privy to the conspiracy. Though there was no evidence of this, and scarcely even a ground for suspicion, Bonaparte sent a party of dragoons into the territory of a neighboring German prince, under whose protection the Duke was living, seized him by force and brought him to Vincennes, near Paris, where, after a mock trial, conducted at night, in which sentence had been pronounced beforehand, he was shot with indecent haste. Bonaparte tried to excuse this murder, (for it was nothing else), by saying that it was an act of necessity; but the feeling caused by it throughout Europe was one of indignation and disgust.

The events just described probably hastened a step on which the First Consul had long before decided—the transformation of the so-called French Republic into an Empire. The Senate and the Legislative Chamber agreed that republican institutions had not proved adequate to the necessities of the country, and that a more stable government was indispensable; they therefore proclaimed Napoleon Bonaparte Emperor of the French, the throne being made hereditary in his family. This proposition being put to the vote of the whole nation, was accepted by an enormous majority, in 1804.

And now behold France fastening on herself

deliberately the yoke of hereditary power which she had poured out so much blood and money to shake off! Sir Walter Scott says, "France in 1792 had been like the wild elephant in his fits of fury, when to oppose his course is death; in 1804 she was like the same animal tamed and trained, who kneels down and suffers himself to be mounted by the soldiers whose business it is to drive him into the throng of the battle."

From this time we know Bonaparte only under his Christian name, such being the custom in regard to royal persons. The first king of the house of Tudor or of Capet dropped his family name on coming to the throne, and the Corsican soldier would be no whit behind them. He was crowned in the Cathedral of Notre Dame, at Paris, with the utmost splendor, by Pope Pius the Seventh, who came from Italy expressly for the purpose. When the Pope would have placed the crown upon his head, Napoleon took it into his own hands and put it on, disdaining to yield to any one else even this symbolical act of power. He himself would be all in all. With his own hand, also, he crowned the lovely Josephine, who knelt before him, and the old church resounded with the grand anthem "*Te Deum*."

In accordance with the custom of the early emperors, Napoleon wished also to be crowned King of Italy, and having by the touch of his wand transformed the Cisalpine Republic into a monarchy, he went to Milan, and there in the cathedral assumed the "iron crown" of the ancient Kings of Lombardy. This diadem took its name from a thin band of iron (said

to have been made from the nails of the true cross) concealed under the velvet and precious stones which form the outside. Napoleon's step-son, Eugene de Beauharnais, was sent to Italy as Viceroy, while the emperor busied himself with his preparations for the invasion of England.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE EMPIRE.—1804—1814.

BEFORE his coronation, Napoleon held a grand review of the "army of England" at Boulogne, where, seated in the thousand-years-old chair of Dagobert, which he caused to be transported from Paris for the occasion, he distributed crosses of the Legion of Honor among his soldiers, whom his presence never failed to fill with the wildest enthusiasm. After becoming Emperor, he made overtures of peace to England, addressing George the Third as his "brother;" but was told, through the secretary of state, that Great Britain could do nothing without consulting the other European powers. The ministry in that country was now again in the hands of Pitt, and all felt sure, by this time, that the Emperor was not sincere in his professed desire for peace. England entered into another league with Russia and Austria against their grasping "brother;" and when an Austrian army took the field with the purpose of recovering some of the places which had been seized

by Napoleon, the army intended to invade England was hastily withdrawn from the Channel coast and marched into Germany without delay.

In three weeks, and without any great battle, the eighty thousand men composing the Austrian force were taken prisoners or dispersed by the consummate skill of Napoleon, who entered Vienna as a conqueror and established himself in the imperial palace. From the cannon found in the arsenals was made the famous column in the Place Vendôme at Paris.

In the midst of the exultation produced by such successes as these, news came from the coast of Spain which would have dampened the spirits of any other nation than the French. The battle of Trafalgar, fought by the English under Lord Nelson against the French fleet, had resulted in the almost total destruction of Napoleon's navy. Dreaded as he was on land, the moment he ventured to dispute with England the empire of the seas, he was overwhelmed. The unfortunate Admiral Villeneuve, who had commanded the French ships in the action, committed suicide while awaiting his trial by court-martial for the loss of the battle. After this, Napoleon sent no more fleets to sea. Before he returned to his own country, however, the battle of Austerlitz, that masterpiece of military skill, had effaced from men's minds all thoughts of the naval misfortune. This has been called "the battle of the three emperors," for Francis of Austria and Alexander of Russia witnessed from a neighboring hill the destruction of their magnificent armies. They fled from the scene, and at the Peace of Presburg which followed, Napoleon was again the arbiter of nations. Slices

were cut from Austria in various places and bestowed upon her neighbors at the will of the mighty autocrat, while the Czar of all the Russias was thankful to be allowed to retire unmolested to his own dominions.

Austria and Russia humbled and England silenced, Napoleon now turned his attention towards the South. A slight pretext was sufficient to draw from him the declaration that "the House of Bourbon had ceased to reign in Naples;" the royal family withdrew to Sicily and the vacant throne was filled by Joseph Bonaparte, the elder brother of the Emperor. His brother Louis was made King of Holland, while dukedoms and principalities rewarded the brave generals who had been made "Marshals of France" after his coronation. The "Confederacy of the Rhine" was entered into by various German Princes, who at his command declared themselves forever separated from Germany, and that ancient empire, which had existed for a thousand years, was broken up. Francis the Second, who had been Emperor of Germany, dropped that title and called himself Emperor of Austria, of which country he had before been Grand-Duke. There was not another Emperor of Germany until 1871.

The King of Prussia had not been warned by the fate of his neighbors. Resenting an affront offered him by Napoleon, he raised a great army and placed in command of it the Duke of Brunswick, who had commanded the armies allied against France in 1792. At the battle of Jena this splendid host was routed with terrible carnage, and the king and queen fled in haste from their capital, where Napoleon fixed his headquarters. Here he displayed all the insolence of triumph.

The royal family were insulted, the richly-stored galleries and museums robbed of their treasures of art, and the nobility treated with galling contempt. In the "Berlin Decrees," issued at this time, Napoleon reached the last extreme of assumption. As he could not by his own power drive England from the seas, he resolved to make use of other nations as his tools for that purpose. He declared the British Isles in a state of blockade, (on paper), forbade all trade with the detested islanders, confiscated the property of British subjects wherever found, and prohibited all vessels of any nationality coming from England or her ports in any part of the world, from entering the harbors of France. This was called the "Continental System" and any nation that refused to act upon it became Napoleon's enemy.

More fighting again, this time with the Russians. They defeated Napoleon at the battle of Eylau; but in a few months he brought two hundred thousand men to bear on the enemy, and at Friedland victory was again on his side. After this the Czar was quite ready to conclude a peace, and a meeting took place between them like those of an earlier century in the river Bidassoa. Exactly in the middle of the river Niemen, which in one place separates Russia from Prussia, a large raft was moored; on this a tent was erected, and in this tent the emperors met and embraced each other. "I hate the English as much as you do," were the first words of business spoken by the Czar. "In that case," answered Napoleon, "peace is made already." This peace is known to the world as the Treaty of Tilsit. By this it was arranged that the king of Prussia

should give up the western portion of his country, which was to be called the Kingdom of Westphalia and given to Napoleon's brother Jerome, and on the east, that part of Poland which had come to Prussia in the partition of 1772, was to be handed over to the king of Saxony. The down trodden Poles, who had furnished Napoleon some fine troops, hoped through his means to recover their independence, and were bitterly disappointed at the result of the conference.

The marvelous fortunes of Napoleon were at their height after the Peace of Tilsit. The people of France were in a state of delirious enthusiasm. He was to them more than a hero; he was a demigod. Language failed in attempting to express their idolatry, and some of the flatteries addressed to him recall to our minds the court of Queen Elizabeth. He repaid this devotion by a more than Tudor-like tyranny. The press was placed exclusively under his control, and nothing could be published which had not been first examined by his censors. To supply soldiers for his destructive campaigns, he resorted to a merciless conscription, anticipating each year the legal age at which men could be drafted into the army, until towards the end of his career the regiments were made up largely of boys, of whom more died from fatigue and exhaustion than on the field of battle.

Of all the aggressions of Napoleon, his conduct towards Spain and Portugal was perhaps the one most utterly without a shadow of justification. He had ordered the Regent of Portugal to arrest all the British subjects in his dominions and confiscate all British property. The Regent, though he complied, showed

some disinclination thus to outrage a nation with which he was at peace; upon which Napoleon declared that the House of Braganza* had ceased to reign in Europe, and sent General Junot there with thirty thousand men to make his statement good. He next induced the king of Spain to trust himself and his family on French soil, and when he had them safe at Bayonne, procured from them an act resigning all their rights into his hands, after which his brother Joseph was promoted to fill the throne of Spain, the kingdom of Naples passing to Murat, who had married Caroline Bonaparte, Napoleon's sister.

The subjects of the two feeble kings thus driven from their dominions did not take matters so easily. Insurrections arose at once in Spain, and daily assassinations, not only of the French, but of Spaniards who favored them, showed how determined the natives were to resist foreign interference. One French general was forced to surrender, with his army; another was beaten at the battle of Vimiera by the English commander Wellesley, (afterwards Duke of Wellington), and driven out of Portugal. Napoleon now crossed the Pyrenees in person, defeated the Spaniards in several battles, and replaced his brother Joseph on the tottering throne which was anything but a bed of roses to him. The battle of Corunna will always be remembered by Englishmen on account of the death of Sir John Moore, immortalized by the verses beginning,

“Not a drum was heard, nor a funeral note.”

* The name of the royal family of Portugal.

The English had the advantage, but immediately afterwards embarked for home, leaving Spain to take care of itself for a time. They afterwards sent another army, and the Peninsular War continued for six years with varying success: the battles of Talavera, Albuera, Salamanca and Vittoria were gained by the English during this time, and in 1813 the French were driven out of the Peninsula altogether.

King Joseph escaped with his life, though little more, and retired into the obscurity from which his brother had dragged him forth. He was himself of a mild disposition, (a fact which subjected him to bitter taunts from Napoleon), but the barbarities committed or permitted by the French Marshals during his short reign made the French name deservedly odious in the Peninsula.

We must now go back to the wars with other nations, for the emperor's life was but one succession of contests. The Austrians took advantage of his absence in Spain to bring an enormous army into the field. Napoleon hurried back into his own country, crossed the Rhine, drove all before him, took sixty thousand prisoners and great quantities of artillery, and a second time entered Vienna as a conqueror. It was after this, at the battle of Aspern, that he ordered his first retreat. Here forty thousand men were sacrificed without accomplishing anything on either side, and the fiery Marshal Lannes, one of Napoleon's greatest favorites, received his death-wound. It seemed as if the great soldier's enemies had begun to learn from him the art of war.

In a few days the battle of Wagram, a brilliant

victory for the French, terminated the struggle. The Emperor of Austria, hopeless of resisting what seemed to be his fate, signed a humiliating treaty of peace by which he gave up to Napoleon a vast extent of territory, a tribute in money, and his kingly dignity, for he promised adherence to the Continental System, and acknowledged each of the newly-created monarchies.

We have seen the conqueror loading his own family with honors to which they had no claim; we have seen him place upon his wife's brow the coronet which made her a sharer in his intoxicating triumph; we have now to see how little real feeling lurked under this apparent generosity, and how coolly the being who was dearest to him was sacrificed as soon as he thought that her place could be filled by one who would minister better to his ambition. The Empress Josephine had been to him the most tender and devoted wife. She had bestowed her hand upon him when he was a poor young lieutenant, with nothing, as her friends said in trying to dissuade her from the marriage, but "his cloak and his sword," and she had presided over his court with a grace and sweetness which made up to some extent for his own insolent and discourteous manners. But his heart was set on being the founder of a family which should carry down his greatness to future generations, and Josephine had no children after her marriage with him. Napoleon, therefore, with profound selfishness and a perfect indifference to the laws of God and man, determined to separate from her. The Senate and the Ecclesiastical Court of Paris, which were but the slaves of his will,

pronounced a decree of divorce, and the warm-hearted wife, whose affection for her husband continued through both good and evil fortune, was sent to wear out her soul in sorrow at Malmaison, a beautiful country-place which Napoleon had given her in their happy days, and where she spent, in dignified retirement, the remainder of a chequered life.

Hoping to purchase the friendship of the great powers of Europe by an alliance with one of them, Napoleon soon afterwards married Maria Louisa, daughter of the Emperor of Austria. A son, who was immediately proclaimed King of Rome, was born of this union; but apart from this it did not produce the hoped-for results. The proud sovereigns who were obliged to receive Napoleon as a political equal, liked him none the better for thus forcing himself into their family circle; and in France the marriage was extremely unpopular. From this time we begin to see indications of his downfall; and the coincidence is too striking not to have furnished reasons to many observers for connecting his subsequent misfortunes with this abandonment of justice and honor.

The Continental System soon gave excuse for more "annexing." As Pope Pius the Seventh declined to concur in it, or to recognize Murat as King of Naples, the Papal States were declared annexed to the French Empire, though the Pope was graciously permitted to remain in the Vatican. Declining the friendship of France at the price of submission, he excommunicated Napoleon and everybody who aided and abetted him. Upon this the aged pontiff was seized in his palace at midnight and carried off to

France, where he was detained, though treated with respect, for nearly five years.

Louis Bonaparte, also, the King of Holland, refused to destroy the prosperity of his new subjects by sacrificing their commerce with England. Thereupon his affectionate brother sent Marshal Oudinot into Holland with twenty thousand men, to take possession of the country and annex it to France. Louis retired to Austria, and from that country issued a proclamation letting the world know very plainly what he thought of such efforts at universal dominion.


In still another quarter, the great dictator found his will resisted. The King of Sweden, having no children, had appointed as his heir Bernadotte, one of Napoleon's marshals. This proved an excellent choice for Sweden, but was displeasing to Napoleon, who did not find his old companion-in-arms as docile as he could have wished. The Berlin decrees were, as usual, the occasion of strife. Bernadotte, a just and honorable man, was unwilling to enforce what was so manifestly unreasonable, and Swedish Pomerania, a province within the present territory of Prussia, became a depot for English merchandise. Early in the year 1812, a year memorable for its later events, a French army was sent, without any declaration of war, into Pomerania, and Bernadotte appealed to Alexander of Russia for assistance.

The Czar had long felt that it would be impossible for him to continue at peace with Napoleon, but hesitated to begin a struggle which must involve such momentous consequences. Napoleon did not wait for him, however. He put his army in motion and

proceeded to Dresden, where he was splendidly entertained by the king of Saxony, who had also the emperor and empress of Austria and the king of Prussia, besides lesser monarchs, for his guests. Surrounded thus by crowned heads and by a brilliant circle of princes, dukes, marshals and nobility of various sorts, Napoleon passed several weeks at Dresden, awaiting the return of his envoy from Russia. On finding that the Czar would not come to terms, he exclaimed with his usual haughtiness, "Russia is dragged on by a fate; let her destiny be accomplished!" If he could have looked a little farther into the book of Fate, he would have seen that it was not her destiny that was to be fulfilled, but his own.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

FROM THE EXPEDITION TO RUSSIA TO THE RETURN
FROM ELBA. 1812-1815.

EVER in modern times has an army so enormous as that of Napoleon now was, moved at once in one direction. The most moderate accounts place its numbers at nearly half a million of men. Not all of this vast host were Frenchmen. Austrians and Prussians, Swiss and Italians, even recreant Spaniards and Portuguese, pressed forward, hoping to find victory and booty under the banners of France. The rendezvous was at Wilna in Poland, and

many Poles eagerly seized the opportunity of attacking Russia, their enemy and oppressor, under the safeguard of the conqueror's protection. As it was late in the summer before the immense force of all arms could be collected, it was proposed to postpone the advance until the following year, but Napoleon's longing for conquest would not allow him to wait. "Peace," he said, "awaits us under the walls of Moscow!"

Towards Moscow, therefore, he set his face. The Russian policy was at first only to harrass his army by cutting off small bodies of men who were foraging for subsistence, and to turn the country into a desert by burning villages and towns, as well as all fruits of the harvest that lay in the path of the invader. A battle, however, was hazarded at the village of Borodino, where there was a tremendous loss of life on both sides, and the Russian army under General Kutusoff was compelled to retreat, though not without giving the invaders a staggering blow. After this, Napoleon was allowed to pursue his way to Moscow, for the enemy well knew that his persistence would prove his destruction. The terrors of a Russian winter had not been counted on as among the obstacles to be met by the French. Being in the midst of a hostile country, without food, and all communication with his own country having been cut off, it would be only necessary to leave the enemy to the forces of nature to insure his ruin.

As the French army drew nearer, the Russians in Moscow quietly began to depart. The wealthier part of the population went first, carrying with them their

valuables of every description; the middle classes followed; whatever could be taken in their hurried departure was removed, and when the Emperor entered the old capital there remained only empty houses and the lowest class of the population. Napoleon established himself in that part of the city called the Kremlin, in a magnificent palace which had been inhabited by Russian emperors up to the time of Peter the Great. On the same night a fire broke out in the city, and the soldiers, exhausted with fatigue as they were after their weary march, were roused from their sleep to quell it. After raging for several hours it was put down, but the next night flames burst forth in so many places at once as to show an intention to burn out the French as well as starve and freeze them out. This time the conflagration could not be controlled; a fierce wind fanned the flames, and a great part of the city lay in ruins. Napoleon now proposed negotiation, but General Kutusoff answered that no negotiation could be even begun while a single French soldier remained on Russian soil. Finding him firm in this determination, the invader prepared, with a heavy heart, to retreat. Marshal Mortier, who commanded the rear-guard, was ordered to blow up the Kremlin. Fortunately for Moscow, the rapid return of the Russian army prevented this act of vandalism from being fully carried into effect.

The horrors of that homeward march one hardly dares to describe. The winter set in earlier than usual and with frightful severity. The soldiers died by thousands in the wild snow-storms which swept over the country, and many of those who lay down by their

camp-fires at night were found cold and stiff in the morning. They were poorly fed, and the weakness arising from this increased their sensibility to cold. Almost all the horses died, and thousands of wagons, laden with provisions and with the spoils of Moscow, were abandoned on the road. One of the officers who accompanied Napoleon on that dreadful journey tells us that all along their line of march were little hillocks in the snow, which the next spring's thaw discovered to be caused by the bodies of French soldiers as they fell by twos and threes to rise no more. When the army reached the plain of Borodino they saw the remains of twenty thousand unburied corpses of their countrymen, partly devoured by beasts of prey. But they were obliged to hasten on, with only a passing glance of dismay.

I quote Sir Walter Scott's description of a part of this march. "The stragglers, who now comprehended almost the whole army, divided into little bands, who assisted each other, and had sometimes the aid of a miserable horse, which, when it fell down under the burden of what they had piled on it, was torn to pieces and eaten, while life was yet palpitating in its veins. These bands had chiefs selected from among themselves. Those associated into such a fraternity would communicate to none save those of their own party, a mouthful of rye-dough, which, seasoned with gunpowder for want of salt, and eaten with a bouillé of horse-flesh, formed the best part of their food. Neither would they permit a stranger to warm himself at their fires, and when spoil was found, two of these companies often, especially if of differ-

ent countries, fought for the possession of it; and a handful of meal was a sufficient temptation for putting to death the wretch who could not defend his booty."

At the passage of the river Beresina a Russian force was waiting to intercept them. Napoleon instantly had two bridges thrown across the river, over which the greater part of his army crossed without loss. Then the Russians suddenly attacked the remaining body, and to prevent the enemy from crossing the river one bridge was blown up, by order of the French general, while the other broke down under the weight of the artillery. A heart-rending scene followed. Thousands of the struggling troops were drowned in the icy waters; thousands more, driven back upon the Russian sabres, were slaughtered, and the remainder were taken prisoners.

After all these vicissitudes, and many, many more, probably not more than one-tenth of the gallant men who set out with Napoleon from Wilna five months before, remained to cross the Niemen as a straggling mass of fugitives, without order or discipline, on their return. Their commander had already deserted them. Quitting the army in disguise, he went forward on sledges with three or four of his friends, as fast as horses could carry them, and traveling as secretly as possible, reached Paris only a few hours after his bulletin saying that all was lost had been published in the capital.

It was not long before Napoleon was on his way to Prussia with another army, for the king of Prussia and the Czar had allied themselves together to resist him, and France once more poured out her thousands, as she

was persuaded, for her defence, not knowing that it was only that the Emperor might continue to be the autocrat of Europe. After the desperately-fought battles of Lutzen and Bautzen, in which a barren victory remained with the French, no trophies having been won, Austria, acting as a mediator, proposed terms of peace. These terms were that France should abandon the greater part of her conquests, which were to be restored to the rightful owners. This offer Napoleon indignantly refused, and the Emperor Francis announced his intention of joining himself to the opposite side.

Three great nations were now in arms against France, besides the English, who, under Wellington, were gradually driving the French out of Spain.

Napoleon had established his headquarters at Dresden, in very different style from that of his visit there on his way to Russia, and it was near this city that a battle was fought extending over two days, which resulted in the defeat of the allies, who retreated in confusion. At the battle of Dresden the famous general Moreau, the victor of Hohenlinden, received his death-wound. Banished from France on suspicion of conspiring against Napoleon, who had alienated him by jealousy and unkindness, he had been persuaded to join the Allies, and perished in his first battle against the soldiers of his native land.

We now come to the deadliest struggle of modern times, "the battle of the nations," fought at Leipsic. For three days rivers of blood were poured out; Russian, Austrian, Prussian, Swedish troops succeeded each other in almost countless numbers; the armies

of Saxony and Wurtemberg, which had enlisted under French banners, deserted to the enemy; Napoleon had no fresh levies to draw upon, while the allies were constantly reinforced, and on the morning of the fourth day he ordered a retreat. It is estimated that the number of troops engaged on both sides during these bloody days amounted to nearly four hundred thousand. The gallant Polish warrior, Poniatowski, whom the Emperor had recently made a marshal of France, died by drowning during the retreat.

The retreat was a scene of wretched disorder. Great numbers of the troops perished from privation, and though Napoleon managed to win a battle on the way to Paris, his army was in a shattered condition. Whenever he was not present, fortune seemed to desert the French standard. Tidings reached him from every quarter of surrendered garrisons, lost battles, forsaken conquests. The Confederation of the Rhine melted away. Hanover returned to England, Westphalia to Prussia, Holland to its lawful rulers; and the year which witnessed the battle of Leipsic and all these consequent disasters, also saw Joseph Bonaparte driven out of Spain, and the Duke of Wellington advancing on French soil as far as to the gates of Bayonne.

Napoleon was now forced to make a candid statement of his situation to the Senate and to ask for a fresh levy of men, which was granted; but where were the men to come from? The nation had been drained of them. He complained bitterly that they furnished him only boys,—“food for powder,” he said, “fit to encumber the hospitals and die by the

roadside,"—instead of vigorous troops. With their utmost exertions little more than an army of a hundred thousand men could be raised, while the allies proceeded to invade France itself, by three different roads, with not less than two hundred thousand.

It was now no longer a strife for conquest; it was a struggle for existence. On quitting the Tuileries to take the field, Napoleon confided to the National Guard his wife and infant son, "all that was dearest to him in the world," he told them. Maria Louisa was named Regent, with Joseph Bonaparte, the ex-king of Spain, as her chief counsellor. The Allies proclaimed to the world that they fought, not against France, but against Napoleon. The stupendous military genius of the great conqueror never appeared greater than now with all the world in arms against him. His ceaseless activity, his wonderful plans and combinations, his forced marches so rapid as to seem almost impossible, continually surprising the enemy, all spoke the mighty genius—but his star was waning. The allied armies marched on Paris while he was defending the frontiers, and after a heroic defence by Marshal Marmont the capital was forced to surrender. To have held out longer would have been only a willful sacrifice of life. The French troops were permitted to retire, and the Allies entered Paris in triumph amidst the silent wonder of the inhabitants, who had been deceived as to their real numbers. The people of Paris, always fickle and now thoroughly tired of Napoleon's rule, shouted their hurrahs for the emperor of Russia, for the king of Prussia, for Louis the Eighteenth; and the Senate proclaimed that Napoleon

Bonaparte, having violated the laws of France and the rights and liberties of the people, had forfeited the throne, and that the French nation and the army were released from their engagements to him. Maria Louisa and the young King of Rome had retired from the city before the fighting began.

Napoleon, hastening back as soon as he knew the enemy's movements, had advanced to within ten miles of Paris before he heard the news of the capitulation. It was a complete surprise to him, and at first he insisted on pressing on to the capital, feeling certain that his presence alone would turn the tide in his favor; but yielding to the advice of his friends he went to Fontainebleau, and there after a few days' delay signed an act of abdication by which he renounced for himself and his heirs all rights to the thrones of France and Italy. He took a most pathetic leave of his "Old Guard" in the court at Fontainebleau, (April 20th, 1814), and then set out with an escort provided by the Allies, for the island of Elba, which had been assigned as his residence.

Maria Louisa retired with her son to Vienna, where she could be under her father's protection. The Empress Josephine lived but a short time after Napoleon's abdication, dying at Malmaison within six weeks after his departure. She was deeply lamented by the poor, to whom she had always been a kind friend; and her husband cherished her memory to his latest hour with probably the tenderest affection of which his self-centered soul was capable.

On the same day that Napoleon quitted Fontainebleau, Louis the Eighteenth, (brother, as will be re-

membered, of Louis the Sixteenth, and uncle of the poor boy who was a victim to the Reign of Terror, and who would have become Louis the Seventeenth had he lived), set out from his country-house in England to take possession of the vacant throne of France. He was received by the Royalists with wild enthusiasm, but the mass of the people looked on in silence, scarcely knowing what to make of this sudden change of rulers.

By the side of Louis as he rode through the streets sat his niece, Maria Theresa, the Duchess of Angoulême, daughter of Louis the Sixteenth, who had shared her mother's imprisonment in the Temple, and had seen all her family, one after another, fall victims to the fury of the Revolution. Louis had promised to support a liberal constitution, not unlike that of Great Britain, and he no doubt intended, according to his understanding of the term, to rule well; but he was dull and self-indulgent, and quite willing to give the government into the hands of his brother, the Count d'Artois, a restless, intriguing person, who had the true Bourbon hatred of liberty, and tried to act as if there had been no Revolution.

All the king's proclamations were dated in the nineteenth year of his reign, as if everything that had happened since the death of poor little Louis the Seventeenth,—the Directory, the Consulate, the Empire—were quite unworthy to be mentioned. The king appeared to forget that a great change had come over the state of the people's minds since the days of his grandfather, Louis the Fifteenth, and still closed his decrees with the words "for such is our good pleasure,"

and let his subjects know very plainly that he considered himself king by Divine Right and not by their will. Officers who had seen bloody service under Napoleon were displaced to make room for those who had never drawn sword for their country. Returned emigrants clamored for the restitution of their estates, and could not understand that the old order of things had been done away with. They, like the king and his brother, wanted to replace everything as it was in the year 1789.

A treaty of peace was signed with the Allies, by which France was shorn of most of her Napoleonic conquests. Malta was given up to Great Britain, and Belgium and Holland were united under a native prince, who was to be called King of the Netherlands. A congress met afterwards at Vienna to discuss matters of general European interest, and it seemed as if a permanent peace would be the result of their negotiations, when they were suddenly aroused, in the beginning of March, 1815, by the news that Napoleon had escaped from Elba and landed in France, just about ten months after he had consented to leave it forever. When the excitement caused by such a thrill of surprise had subsided, the allied powers instantly agreed that Napoleon, having violated his plighted word and reappeared in France as a disturber of the peace of the world, must be considered as a public enemy; and three great armies, composed mainly of Russian, Austrian, Prussian and English troops, were set in motion without delay.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE HUNDRED DAYS TO THE REVOLUTION OF JULY,
1815-1830.



HAVING collected an army of about a thousand men, the late Emperor of France landed on the French coast without opposition, and marched northward through a population seemingly indifferent to his motions. Near Grenoble he found an armed force sent to oppose him under command of General Labéboyère. Leaving his own troops at a distance he walked up alone in front of the enemy, wearing the old gray great coat and the little cocked hat which all knew so well, and said in a loud voice, "Soldiers, if there is one among you who wishes to kill his general, he can do so; here I am!" With wild shouts of welcome the soldiers threw down their arms and joined him; their general followed their example, and from this time his march to Paris was a continued triumph. Marshal Ney, whom Napoleon had called "the bravest of the brave," had taken service under Louis, and being sent out to oppose his old general, boasted that he would "bring back the Corsican in an iron cage." But the sight of Napoleon re-awakened his old affection; he forgot his newly taken oath, and went over to the Emperor with all his soldiers. In this way the army proceeded to Paris, growing as it went, and Louis the Eighteenth and his family sought refuge in the Netherlands.

The reception of Napoleon in the capitol was one of delirious rejoicings. People forgot his oppression, his cruel wars, his boundless ambition, and only remembered how they hated the Bourbons. At the Tuileries he was literally carried up the grand stairway in the arms of his adoring followers. He now labored night and day to raise an army to meet the invaders, and had he been allowed three months' time, it is probable that he might have brought hundreds of thousands of men into the field. But the near approach of the Allies decided him to attack them before they could all get together, so he collected what forces he could at once reach, and marched with a hundred and fifteen thousand men into Belgium, called "the battle-ground of Europe," from the many bloody contests which have taken place on its soil. There he found the English under Wellington and the Prussians under Blucher in far greater numbers, with whom he fought the battles of Ligny, Quatre Bras and Waterloo, which ended his career as a soldier.

There has been written more about the battle of Waterloo than about any other battle of ancient or modern times. The forces on each side were only about 75,000 men, (until the arrival of some 30,000 Prussians near the close of the day), which is not one-third of the numbers that have fought in other battles; but it was the last struggle of the greatest soldier known to history; it was the turning point in the annals of France and of Europe; it was furiously fought, every man on both sides being engaged, and the losses were terrible; the victory was decisive and the defeat overwhelming and irretrievable—so it is very

generally thought the most important battle of the world.

Napoleon's own estimate of men is said to have been "one Frenchman equals one Englishman, and each is equal to two men of any other nationality." It had strangely happened that he had never met the English in the field since the siege of Toulon in his early years, the campaigns in Spain and Portugal having been carried on by his subordinates. The English had, on the 16th of June, a rather severe engagement at Quatre Bras with the French under Ney, and had fallen back on the 17th to the rear of a valley with gentle slopes near the village of Waterloo; where they took a position on one crest of the slope, having the valley and the opposite slope in their front, and a forest in their rear through which led the road to the great city of Brussels, only a few miles away. Twelve miles off on their left was the Prussian army, under Blucher, on which Wellington depended to give him a superiority in numbers.

The French, during the day and night of the 17th, had come up, following the English, and had taken their position on the opposite slope. There was a terrible storm of rain on the night of the 17th, which affected the French much more than the English, as the latter had got into position before it began, while the French were laboring through it all night, without sleep or rest.

At about noon on June 18th the French are ready to attack, each army being ranged on its own hill-top in a "line of battle" about one-and-a-half miles long, and the battle begins. Not less than 500 cannon

pour their shot and shell across the narrow valley. Napoleon knows that his whole future depends on his routing the enemy before the Prussians can arrive, so he sends his troops, veterans of a hundred battles, in charge after charge of desperate courage against the stern, immovable lines and squares of the English. Not a foot can the assailants gain which is not at once taken back from them. For five dreadful hours does this carnage continue, until the Duke of Wellington is observed to be looking anxiously at his watch and scanning through his glass the direction through which the Prussians are expected. He is reported to have said aloud: "Oh for night or Blucher!"

At last the Prussians come. Near five o'clock a long dark line is visible far away to the left, and a few cannon shots are heard. Napoleon sees and hears them too. Then massing his "Old Guard," which has been held in reserve for just such a supreme moment, he orders them to charge, himself riding down the road where they pass, to let them see him once more and feel again the inspiration of his presence—and they are gone. In two great columns they march forward with shouts of defiance.

It is their last dying effort. The English pour in a crushing fire of musketry and artillery, and the advancing columns wither away—falter—fall into confusion—halt—finally retreat in disorder—and the great drama of Napoleon Bonaparte's career comes to an end. His "Star of Destiny" has set in blood.

The English at once advance from all sides, across the valley; but the pursuit is left to the fresher troops under Blucher, who give the French no rest until the

whole force is killed, wounded, made prisoners or dispersed. More than 150 cannon are taken by the English, and an equal number by the Prussians, with munitions of war and prisoners innumerable.

Napoleon witnessed with dismay the flight of the Old Guard. "All is lost!" he exclaimed, and putting spurs to his horse rode away from the field at full gallop. He was the first to carry the news of his own defeat to the capital, leaving Marshal Soult to bring together, if possible, the scattered fragments of his army.

When it was known in Paris that he had lost a great battle and had returned alone to Paris, the funds, which he used to call "the thermometer of public opinion," strange to say, rose at once. The feeling was inevitable that tranquility could be restored only by his downfall. "I see but one man between us and peace," said Lafayette addressing the Legislative Chamber. These latter signified to Napoleon that there was no alternative but abdication. The emperor, after a declaration that he offered himself as a sacrifice to the enemies of France, and that he abdicated in favor of his son, went to Rochefort on the coast, meaning there to embark for the United States. But the British were on the watch and refused to let him pass. He then went voluntarily on board the English ship *Bellerophon*, saying that he had come to throw himself upon the hospitality of the British people, and claim the protection of their laws.

The British government, not thinking it safe to leave him at liberty after his breach of faith in escaping from Elba and again plunging Europe in a sea of

blood, sent him as a prisoner of war to the lonely island of St. Helena, where he wore out six years of life in a vain struggle against the harshness and severity of his jailers, who did not treat him with the magnanimity which, when they had him completely in their power, they might safely have exercised. He died in 1821, and his son, the so-called King of Rome, continued to live in great seclusion at Vienna until his death in 1832.

A second time were the Bourbons forced upon the French people by foreign bayonets, and this time the conditions were hard indeed. France was sentenced to pay an enormous sum to the allies for the expenses of the war, to keep in pay for five years an army of a hundred and fifty thousand foreigners on her borders, and to give up a considerable territory on the eastern frontier. She was also required to restore all the works of art taken by Napoleon from conquered cities, which, though an act of simple justice, was felt as a severe humiliation. Having been so long accustomed to look upon the spoils of Rome, of Florence, of Vienna and Dresden as their own, they took pride in them as national possessions and bitterly resented their removal.

Marshal Ney and General Labédoyère, who had deserted to Napoleon with the troops under their charge, were tried and shot for treason. Murat, the brother-in-law of the Emperor, perished in a senseless attempt to recover the kingdom of Naples, of which the lawful sovereign had again taken possession. He landed there with about thirty followers, was taken, tried by a court-martial and shot. The brothers of Napoleon

and many of his generals retired to private stations, and after some popular tumults, affairs in France became tranquil, and remained so until the death of Louis the Eighteenth, which occurred in 1824. He left no children, and his brother, the Count d'Artois, succeeded to the throne under the name of Charles the Tenth.

It has been said of the Bourbons that "they never learned anything and never forgot anything." The new king proved no exception. He carried matters with a high hand, announced the old doctrine of government by absolute right, and resisted to the extent of his power all the efforts of the liberal party, which was becoming year by year stronger in France, to force him to rule according to the constitution. One of the last public acts of Louis the Eighteenth had been to help the Bourbon sovereigns of Spain and Naples to put down the rebellions which their atrocious tyranny had called forth; and his brother seemed determined to carry out in France the principles which had triumphed in these countries.

Little of outside interest occurred in this reign. After helping the Greeks in their successful struggle against the Turks, who were finally overthrown in 1827 at the battle of Navarino, a squadron was sent to Algiers to demand reparation for injuries done to the French consul and others in that city. A battle was fought in which the Algerines were defeated by Marshal Bourmont, and the Dey abandoned his country, which has since remained a province of France under the name of Algeria.

It was hoped by the home government that this


brilliant conquest would calm the excitement which filled the country at the despotic measures of Charles the Tenth, but the irritation continued to increase and was fed by the obstinacy of the king, who defied the wishes of the people by arbitrary enactments which constantly widened the breach between them. When remonstrated with he would say, "Louis the Sixteenth lost his throne by concessions. He was led to the scaffold for having yielded." Accordingly, Charles would yield nothing, but on the contrary, dismissed the Cabinet officers who were popular with the people, and appointed others known only for their blind devotion to the old system. As if to leave nothing undone which could insure the loss of his crown, he issued decrees suppressing the liberty of the press, dissolving the newly elected legislature before it had met, and making arbitrary changes in the system of election, with a view to bringing the nation more completely into subjection. A revolt which turned out to be a revolution was the immediate consequence of these suicidal actions. In the "three days of July," 1830, the people once more arose against the exercise of illegal power. Barricades were erected in the streets; the tri-colored flag was displayed on the public buildings; "the population was transformed into an army and every house became a fortress." The venerable La Fayette was called from his retirement to take command of the National Guard. Marshal Marmont, the commander of the royal forces, had urged the king to pacify the people by yielding while there was yet time, but received no answer except an order to suppress the rebellion by force of arms. The soldiers, obliged to

fight in narrow streets, were almost at the mercy of the populace, who shot at them from windows, walls and housetops, and finally compelled them to retreat. The mob then broke into the Tuileries palace and sacked it. The costly furniture was hacked to pieces and thrown into the Seine, and the victory was celebrated with frantic demonstrations of joy. The king now offered to make concessions, but it was too late. Nothing was left for him but flight.

The memorable "three days" were the 27th, 28th, and 29th of July, and within two days afterward Charles removed from his palace of St. Cloud and prepared to leave the country. He now hoped that though he renounced the crown for himself it might still be worn by a member of his family. The people of France, however, preferred to pass over the elder branch of the Capetians, and offered the crown to Louis Philippe, son of the too famous "Philippe Egalité" of the Revolution. The offer was accepted, and Louis Philippe ascended the throne as "King of the French"—not king of France, which would have implied rather a hereditary right, than a choice by the people. The Duke of Bordeaux, grandson of Charles the Tenth, is still (1878) living in Europe under the title of Comte de Chambord, and would, if restored to the throne, be called Henry the Fifth.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

LOUIS PHILIPPE.—1830—1848.

HE career of the King of the French had been as varied as that of a hero of romance. Born in a palace, he began at the age of twenty years a life of exile which endured for as many more, and was often hard pressed to find means to buy the necessities of life. In Switzerland he taught a village school; in the United States he gave lessons in the French language, preserving his self-respect by providing for his own needs.

When at the restoration of the Bourbons the wanderer returned to France, he found himself possessed of a princely fortune, but looked upon coldly by his royal relatives for the very reason which afterwards made his restoration under the name of "citizen-king" so popular with the masses; he had fought bravely under Kellerman and Dumouriez against the enemies of the Republic, and steadily refused to join the army of emigrants collected for the invasion of France. When, therefore, he told his people that the charter would now be a reality, a constitutional monarchy,—that golden mean between despotism and anarchy,—seemed to have been reached. "Here," said La Fayette as he presented him to the people, "is the best of republics." How far such hopes were realized will appear later in our history.

Peace with foreign nations was the policy of the

new government, and was faithfully adhered to as far as possible. The inhabitants of Belgium, which had in 1815 been annexed to Holland, threw off their allegiance to the latter country and offered the crown to a son of Louis Philippe; but the king with great good sense declined the tempting bait, knowing that to swallow it would bring on a European war. Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg was chosen, and, marrying the eldest daughter of the King of the French, joined the two countries in a union of interest. Louis Philippe was an excellent man of business, clear-headed, calculating, economical; his private character was unblemished and his intentions undoubtedly good; but he was tinged with the prevailing vice of the Bourbons, a love of power, which developed itself more strongly as he grew older. No doubt he had a difficult position to maintain. On the one hand were the Republicans, disapproving of a king of any kind; on the other the Legitimists, who wished to place on the throne the grandson of Charles the Tenth rather than the remote cousin who must go back to Louis the Thirteenth for his claim. A third class, which should not be confounded with those who were Republicans on principle, was composed of the idle and vicious of all ranks, who clamored for "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity," with very little idea of the meaning of their demands except the general notion that the rich ought to be made, somehow or other, to support the poor.

With so many contradictory elements, it is not strange that disturbances arose in various parts of the country, which, being put down by force, made the king very unpopular. No fewer than seven attempts

against his life were made in the course of a few years. The principal one among these was the work of an Italian named Fieschi, who contrived an "infernal machine" which was to blow up Louis Philippe as he was riding in a procession to commemorate the Revolution of July. The king was not hurt, but many persons were killed or wounded. Among those killed was Marshal Mortier, one of Napoleon's old generals.

In the year following this attempt (1836) Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, son of the Emperor's brother Louis and of Hortense de Beauharnais, suddenly appeared at Strasburg dressed in the costume of an officer of artillery, and called upon the garrison to join him in an attempt to gain his uncle's throne. Some enthusiasm was shown, but the troops remained true to their colors, and M. Bonaparte was arrested. The king, however, declined to prosecute him, and he came to this country, where he spent some years in the neighborhood of New York. In 1840 he again attempted to overturn the government of Louis Philippe, carrying with him into France a tame eagle, which was expected to make a sort of rallying-point for the disaffected. But the eagle proved less attractive than had been expected, and was confiscated for the Zoological gardens, while its owner was arrested and imprisoned in the chateau of Ham. There he remained for six years, and then made his escape disguised as a workman, taking refuge in England, to re-appear before long in France under another character.

During the first ten years of Louis Philippe's reign, France was at peace with all the outside world except

the unconquered tribes of Algeria. In 1840 the British government consented to the removal of the remains of Napoleon from St. Helena to Paris, in accordance with one of the last wishes expressed by him. Three of the faithful friends who had shared his exile were present at the disinterment, and found the features still perfect after nineteen years. The arrival of the funeral cortége in Paris and the re-interment of the coffin in the vault of the Hotel des Invalides was a scene never to be forgotten.

Notwithstanding this act of courtesy on the part of England, she still kept a jealous eye on the movements of France, and stood ready to resist any attempt at aggression. She did not like the occupation by the French of the Society Islands in the Pacific, nor the marriage of the Duke of Montpensier, one of Louis Philippe's sons, with the sister of the queen of Spain, thus rendering possible once more the union of the two crowns in one person, and she was anxious lest the Algerian conquest should extend far enough to threaten Gibraltar; but no actual hostilities resulted from this displeasure. The king, however, took advantage of the circumstance to surround Paris with extensive fortifications, which caused loud murmurs among the people, who feared that this might be made a means of interfering with their liberties.

The death in 1842 of the Duke of Orleans, oldest son of Louis Philippe, who was killed by being thrown from his carriage, was a source of deep grief to the French nation, as well as to his family, as he was a man of admirable qualities. He left two sons, the Comte de Paris, now the representative of the

royal family of Bourbon-Orleans, and the Duke de Chartres. Both these princes came to America and helped the Union cause in the great Rebellion, and the Comte de Paris has since written an excellent history of the struggle, a fact which speaks well for the practical ability of this scion of a royal race.

In Algeria, a protracted strife between the native tribes and the conquerors had been going on since the first occupation of the country by the French, and many of the best troops of France were sacrificed to the unhealthy climate and in the bloody combats. The Arab chieftain, Abdel-Kader, a man whose military genius and indomitable courage would have made him rank high among the warriors of any nation, held out with the greatest obstinacy, but was at last taken prisoner and carried to France, where he was kept in confinement for six years. The Algerine war is computed to have cost France, up to the time of his capture in 1847, a thousand millions of francs, and the lives of three hundred thousand men.

Many causes of discontent had arisen during the reign of Louis Phillippe, which were artfully increased by a class of agitators called Socialists, who had nothing to lose and everything to gain by disorder and civil strife. A failure in the harvest raised the price of provisions, and the same cause made work scarce and wages low. All this was laid to the account of the government, and as some arbitrary measures gave just offence to the people, the demand for "Reform" was made to cover the whole ground, and the censorship of the press ingeniously manipulated so as to be held responsible for the bad crops.

The agitators held a series of "Reform banquets" in the different cities, and one was appointed to take place in Paris on the 22d of February, 1848. This was forbidden by the authorities, upon which a popular tumult arose, in which the King and his ministers showed so little firmness or good sense that the end was an entire overthrow of the government. Though Louis Philippe had the best minds in the kingdom to assist him, such men as Thiers and Guizot forming part of his council, no one among them had the ability to conquer a revolution. The National Guard, seeing the vacillation of their rulers, sided with the rioters; the king fled after vainly trying to secure the crown to his grandson the Comte de Paris, and a republic was proclaimed amid general confusion. Louis Philippe, with his family, went to England, where he died two years afterward.

For some days it seemed uncertain whether the new Revolution would not repeat the scenes of 1789. Paris was ruled by an armed mob, who clamored for immediate relief of their needs, but opposed every movement which proposed to establish a settled government. M. de Lamartine, a celebrated French author, was placed temporarily at the head of affairs, and showed great wisdom and firmness.

Among the measures insisted on by the populace was the establishment of national workshops, where the idle poor could find employment. After a little trial this experiment was shown to be ruinous to the State, and useless for the workmen, who squandered in dissipation the money thus paid them; but as was to be expected, the attempt to discontinue them was

attended with frightful carnage. Barricades were raised instantly in the streets, and before order could be restored, thousands of lives had been sacrificed. General Cavaignac was made military dictator, and put down the riots with a decision which, had it been displayed by the Royalists at the first outbreak, would have left the king on his throne. Among the victims of this sanguinary contest was the venerable Archbishop of Paris, who lost his life by a random shot while he was trying to mediate between the soldiers and the mob.

The republic being established, a president was to be chosen. There were two candidates—General Cavaignac, who had saved the city, and Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, the hero of Strasburg and Ham. The magic of a name decided the fickle public in favor of the latter; he was elected for a term of four years by an immense majority, and entered upon the duties of his office in December, 1848.

1848 has been called "The year of Revolutions." The disturbances in France sent an electric thrill over the continent, almost every country not governed by an autocrat feeling it more or less. In Italy, especially, there were convulsive efforts to throw off the Austrian dominion in the north, and the Pope was so much alarmed by the condition of affairs in Rome that he fled from the city, and a republican government was proclaimed there, General Garibaldi taking command of the revolutionary troops. Pius the Ninth now called upon France to interpose in his behalf, and by the help of French bayonets the insurrection was quelled and the pontiff replaced on his throne.

It soon became evident to the world at large that the nephew of Napoleon the First was preparing to re-enact some scenes of the great drama played by his distinguished uncle. On the second of December, 1851, one of those coups d'état took place for which France has become so famous. It was much like the Revolution of the 18th Brumaire. The President of the French Republic in one night overthrew the government, dissolving the Assembly by his own decree and appointing a ministry responsible only to himself. Soldiers were at hand to quell every disturbance; as soon as possible the people were appealed to, and the votes of an enormous majority of them elected Louis Napoleon Bonaparte President for ten years with the powers of a dictator. Parliamentary government had not worked well in France. It had produced only civil commotion and a restless, ever-varying policy which is in some respects harder to live under than a despotism. The French people were so tired of it that they saw the change almost with indifference, and were, as a whole, neither very much surprised nor affected when in a year after the first coup d'état the President was proclaimed Emperor of France under the name of Napoleon the Third, the shadowy form of the little King of Rome, which faded out of French history with his father's defeat at Waterloo, doing duty as Napoleon the Second.

CHAPTER XL.

THE SECOND EMPIRE.—1852—1870.



FAVORITE saying of the new Emperor was “the Empire is Peace,” and for the first few years of his reign his subjects acknowledged with gratitude that to them his rule meant not only peace but prosperity. There had been an element of the ridiculous in his first attempts to occupy the place of the great Napoleon, but once seated in that place, his talent for governing could not be questioned. Grand public improvements, perfect security, ever-increasing wealth, in spite of the taxes necessary to support an army supposed to be the finest in Europe, and a navy only excelled by that of England,—all these made the mass of the population thoroughly contented, and no more secret grumbling went on than is inevitable even in the best of governments.

In 1853 Napoleon married Eugenie de Montijo, a Spanish lady of great beauty and noble family. For years she and her court set the fashions for all the world. Their only child, a son, was born in 1856.

The first war undertaken by Napoleon was an attempt to preserve the “balance of power” in which the great nations of Europe imagined their own safety to consist. Here a strange scene becomes visible. We have been looking at a thousand years’ history of France, always with a side-glance at England, her great Island neighbor and hereditary foe; and behold,

for almost the first time we see them as allies, fighting side by side against a common enemy. Russia had, for centuries, looked upon Constantinople with covetous eyes, and in 1854 she seemed about to crush Turkey to seize the great prize. But England, for the sake of her interests in India, and France, perhaps with the hope of regaining the political position lost by the treaties of 1815, thought it proper to defend the Sultan. The king of Sardinia joined them on general principles, desiring to have his little state recognized as a member of the great European family—(it has since grown into the kingdom of Italy)—and the three powers united with the Turks in an attack on the great Russian naval station of Sebastopol, the chief city in the Crimea. On the way there the battle of the Alma was fought and won by the Allies, and then the place was besieged in due form.

This siege of eleven months is the most famous in history. All possible modern inventions of warfare were employed on both sides. It was shown that stone walls are not the best defence against great artillery, and that nothing but earthworks can be relied upon. The whole Russian Black Sea fleet was sunk in Sebastopol harbor to keep it from falling into the enemy's hands. The losses on all sides were grievous, and in modern times deaths in the field are more severely felt than of old, on account of the rapid spread of news by means of telegraphs and newspapers, and the sympathy thus awakened with the individual friends of those who die. Mourning was the fashionable wear in Paris, London and St. Petersburg. The battle of Balaklava, otherwise unimportant, is made

memorable by a useless onslaught, (made through mistaken orders, by the choicest cavalry of the British army), called "the charge of the Six Hundred," wherein a very large number of the charging party were killed, and desolation carried into almost every circle of the upper classes in England. The chief battle of the war was Inkermann, where the Russians attacked the allies and were driven back with great loss, but no decisive results.

The largest proportion of the losses was caused by disease and the exposure of troops poorly prepared for a rigorous winter. A terrible outcry was raised at home against this sacrifice of life, occurring where the unstinted outlay of money ought to have guarded against such things. But in this matter the French were found to have a far better system than the English; and after the war was over it was generally acknowledged that the former had reaped much more than the latter of the glory of military success.

In spite of opposition, obstacles, disease and slaughter, the French and English pushed forward their earth-works against the outlying forts of the Russians until there were only a few yards of scored and scourged ground between them; and then one fine day a few picked regiments of the French army rushed across this space and took by storm the chief Russian stronghold, the "Malakoff," in a bloody hand-to-hand fight, and held it. This made the other works untenable, and later the English seized the next strongest work, the "Redan," and Sebastapol was theirs.

The city lay in ruins at the feet of the conquerors, who blew up such forts and docks as the cannon

had spared, and required of the Czar a promise not to rebuild the defences. Russia's aggressions were stopped for the time, and she was forbidden to have ships of war on the Black Sea; but France gained little benefit from this in comparison with her vast sacrifices.

Three years later, Napoleon again interfered in behalf of a brother sovereign. Victor Emanuel, king of Sardinia, who had helped in the war of the Crimea, was invaded in his turn by Austria, and the French Emperor marched at once to his assistance. The names of Montebello, Magenta and Solferino recall to the minds of those of us who have lived through these stirring events the victories by which the third Napoleon signalized his march in Italy.

At the Peace of Villafranca, which ended the war, (1859,) Lombardy, which had been under Austrian rule, was added to Sardinia on the east, while the provinces of Nice and Savoy on the west were given up to France. The Emperor had not lent his support for nothing. This result was not at all what the Italians had expected when he promised them that "Italy should be free from the Alps to the Adriatic," but fortunately for them they had those within their own boundaries who could dispense with foreign aid, and with Victor Emanuel II. for a king and Garibaldi for a general, a united Italy is now the result of their long struggle for unity and independence.

Yet once again did Napoleon find an excuse for interfering in the affairs of other nations. In 1862 he sent an expedition to Mexico, professedly to demand redress for injuries suffered by French residents there.

Having after much fighting taken possession of the capital, the French general in command obtained a declaration from a part of the citizens that they desired an empire and would welcome a foreign ruler. Under the delusion that this was the feeling of the whole country, the Archduke Maximilian, brother of the Emperor of Austria, accepted the invitation tendered him to mount the throne of the Montezumas. A bitter awakening was in store for him. The Republicans were still the strongest party in Mexico; the French troops which should have protected him were withdrawn from the country, and the unfortunate young man, deserted by those who had lured him on, fell a sacrifice to the vengeance of the Mexicans and was shot as a usurper in 1867.

To a superficial view France was now at the height of prosperity, but the more acute observers saw under this the tokens of decay. The enormous sums spent by the Emperor on the improvement of Paris had brought an increase of taxes which were felt to be burdensome; his government was of the most arbitrary pattern; the free expression of opinion was not tolerated, and the garrison which had been kept in Rome since 1849 to support the temporal power of the Pope and keep out Victor Emanuel, offended many of the liberal party. Still, Napoleon might have ended his days in his own capital but for his rushing, unprepared, into a causeless war which ended by driving him from his throne and his country.

The student of history observes that for centuries no nation had been able to make, single-handed, much headway against France in arms; she had been

the chief military power of the world. But after Waterloo, another began to come to the front. The history of Prussia during the years following her humiliations at the beginning of this century, shows that for nations as for individuals, misfortune is a good school. The government of Prussia was severe, industrious, economical, intelligent; and in two wars, the first against Denmark and the second against Austria, she had consolidated under her rule the greater part of the kingdoms, principedoms and dukedoms of Germany. Doubtless one bond of union among these diverse nationalities was a burning desire to wipe out the stains of the insults heaped upon all of them by the French under Napoleon.

No barn-yard can maintain two champions; neither can a community of military nations. It became more and more evident that France and Prussia, each striving to outgrow the other in warlike power, must at some near day find an excuse to come to blows. The quarrel was begun by France on a pretext so slight that one can but feel that so far as aggression merits retribution, her speedy defeat was mere justice. Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, a protégé of Prussia, chanced to be named for the succession to the crown of Spain. France protested, and Leopold withdrew; but when the French emperor demanded of Prussia a promise never again to support a similar claimant from any German State, King William very naturally refused the pledge, and Napoleon at once declared war.

The emperor and the French people honestly thought that their army at this time was the most

perfect in every way that could be conceived of by the mind of man. No money had been spared on its preparation. The Minister of War announced that all was ready. It was popularly said in Paris that "not so much as a shoe-buckle would be required for a year." Very probably no shoe-buckles would be required, as those are things an army can very well do without; but everything an army can not do without, was in fact woefully deficient. Maps, for instance, which are the first requisite for intelligent and rapid army movements, were utterly wanting. Perhaps they had maps of the roads in Germany, where they expected to do their fighting; but it chanced unfortunately for them that they had to fight in their own country, and of France, the Germans had much better maps than they had. The stores and supplies supposed to be on hand either did not exist or were never available at the time and place where they were wanted.

Laughable stories are told of the absurdities of "red tape"—complications of official system—in the French War Department. It is said that a certain mass of army wagons, taken to pieces and stored by thousands in an enclosure, would take two years to unpack, extricate, put together and set in motion. This is of course an exaggeration, but it illustrates the kind of faults into which years of peace and of unwise administration had brought the once active French army.

Even the numbers counted on were not there. But some 240,000 men were on hand, which was more than could be used. This confused mass, miscalled an army, was hurled rapidly toward the frontier of Germany, hoping to find the enemy unprepared. But the

German army was as perfectly ready for war when it left its cantonments, as a machine is ready for work when it leaves the workshop. For an army drilled and exercised as the German army now is, a campaign is merely a kind of excursion for putting in practice the principles which have been studied through years of schooling. There is a story that a Prussian officer, after the war, said to his soldiers, "Now the pastime of war is over, we will return to the serious business of life, which is drilling."

The first collision was a skirmish which occurred at Saarbrück, which the French tried to magnify into a victory. After this followed a series of struggles scarcely to be dignified with the name of battles, so utterly powerless were the ill-ordered, badly officered, disorganized, outgeneraled forces of France against the fierce and steady Germans. Würth, Gravelotte and Sedan were the chief scenes of defeat. At Sedan the French Emperor was taken prisoner, with his army of eighty thousand men. The news of this roused the excitable Parisians to fury, and the whole blame of the reverses was thrown upon Napoleon. The Empire was declared at an end as suddenly as it had been called into existence; a republic, with General Trochu at its head, was hastily proclaimed by a small knot of politicians, and the Empress, who had been left in Paris as Regent, was glad to get away safely from the city. The Germans connived at the escape of her husband after the victory of Sedan, and the imperial family fled to England, where the Emperor has since died, leaving a son, who, we may suppose, hopes one day to rule France as Napoleon the Fourth.

THE THIRD REPUBLIC.

The main interest of the war was now centered in the sieges of three strongly fortified towns—Strasburg, Metz and Paris. Strasburg was taken after a short but severe bombardment, which inflicted irreparable injury on the beautiful city, and Metz was given up a few weeks later by Marshal Bazaine, with 173,000 men; but Paris, with its magnificent system of defences, was enabled to stand a siege of more than four months. During this time much suffering was sustained by the inhabitants, though it is doubtful whether there were any deaths by actual starvation. The beleaguered Parisians communicated with the outside world by means of balloons, which, rising from inside the walls, sailed away high over the heads of the Germans, and, though sometimes taken, more often reached some friendly neighborhood safely. M. Gambetta, the minister of war, escaped in one of these, and endeavored to reinforce the outside armies. Trained carrier-pigeons flew back and forth, conveying rolls of tissue-paper on which thousands of words were photographed; but though these devices kept up hopes of relief, they did not bring bread, and the city at length surrendered to the besiegers.

King William of Prussia, who had been living in the palace at Versailles during the siege, marched with a part of his army under the Arc de Triomphe and to the Place de La Concorde, in token of victory, but did not remain in the city. Perfect order was maintained by the Germans, and, as to the French, they left the streets deserted and the houses closed, to

indicate that though the city was conquered, the citizens were still their own masters. The terms of peace exacted by Prussia were not severe, considering the magnitude of her successes. The principal conditions were the cession of Alsace and a part of Lorraine, (both of which had once belonged to Germany), and the payment of an indemnity amounting to about a thousand millions of dollars.

As soon as the invading force had begun to withdraw, the provisional government established itself at Versailles, wisely declining to entrust itself to the tender mercies of the turbulent Parisians. This caution, and other acts indicating a steady purpose of maintaining law and order, so incensed the old revolutionary spirit always seething in the lower classes of Paris, that they rose against the republican authority, defied it, shut the gates of the city against it and established a government of their own called the Commune, the success of which would probably have produced excesses similar to those of the first Revolution and the Reign of Terror.

The Versailles government, with all the better republicans of France on its side, now attacked the Communists, and a second siege of Paris began, more destructive than the first. Not that the Communists made good fighters; they lacked the first requisites of the true soldier, patience and obedience; but though there may have been conscientious and patriotic spirits among them, the most of the insurgents were more fierce in speech than in action—less ready to stand fire in fair fight than to set fire to their city when they failed in the attempt to hold it against the lawful

government. When they found they could not either beat the national troops or win them over to their own extreme views, they poured petroleum into the finest public buildings of Paris and laid them in ruins; doing more damage to the beautiful capital of their own country, than all it had suffered from a victorious foreigner's taking it by siege.

After these disorders had been quelled, a stable government was established, and M. Thiers was made President of the French Republic for a term of years. Before this had expired, the opposition to his government forced him to resign, and Marshal Mac Mahon was elected in his place, (1873). The government is representative in its character, consisting of the President, a Cabinet of ministers and a Legislature, and the country presents the curious anomaly of a Republic in which aristocratic titles are maintained as in the days of the Empire.

Various attempts have been made by partisans of monarchy on the one hand and of military government on the other, to change the existing order of things; but to their credit be it said, the true Republicans have thus far stood firm in their principles, and have opposed a steady front to all attacks, showing neither cowardice nor violence. They have proved their title to command by their willingness to obey, and the country under them has shown a rapidity of recovery from the evils of war which is unexampled in the world's history, except in our own favored land.

As an illustration of the peace and prosperity in which France now lives, may be mentioned the occur-

rence in Paris of the latest and greatest of the series of World's Fairs, those wonderful exhibitions of the industry and art of all nations. This one has been brilliantly successful; and just as the last pages of this little history are penned, comes the announcement of the close of the Paris Exposition of 1878.

Now we have followed the haps and mishaps during a thousand years of a great nation—a loyal, brave, devoted, generous people. Often we have seen them obedient when they should have resisted, and sometimes resisting when they should have obeyed. When they have borne and inflicted the most misery it has been through the misdirection of some of the best instincts of our nature—piety, loyalty, patriotism, courage, love of liberty. But through it all, through the dark days and through the bright, they have come to what seems to us to be a state better on the whole than any of the transitory conditions through which they have passed.

Whatever may be the opinion of the wise as to the permanency of the present order of things in France, there can scarcely be much doubt but that while it does endure it is the happiest in all her national experience. The present government is, in principle at least, and to a great degree in practice, one “of the people, by the people, for the people.” The individual Frenchman now has a very fair chance to pursue his own happiness in his own way, only using his possessions so as not to injure his neighbors.

Fortunately for her citizens, France has been driven away from her bad eminence as the armed arbiter of nations. Another now carries the hard and

heavy iron gauntlet which is best fitted to grasp the sword-hilt. Hers is the ungloved hand that is light, strong and free to hold the plough or the pen, or the hand of a friend. "Glory," as the word has been understood, she has turned her back upon. That bleak and sterile height to which one man in a million may climb over the crushed hopes of his fellows, has little place in the plan of a free country. The only dominion the French republic can properly strive for is the dominion over the forces of nature, that the sum of human happiness may be increased; over ignorance, that error may be lessened; then her honor and glory will be real, because it will be the honor and glory of God and humanity.

LIST OF KINGS.

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LOUIS IX. (Saint Louis),	1226—1270

	PHILIP III. (the Bold),	1270—1285
	PHILIP IV. (the Fair),	1285—1314
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	PHILIP V. (the Long),	1316—1322
	CHARLES IV. (the Fair),	1322—1328
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	JOHN (the Good),	1350—1364
	CHARLES V. (the Wise),	1364—1380
	CHARLES VI. (the Well-beloved),	1380—1422
	CHARLES VII. (the Victorious),	1422—1461
	LOUIS XI.,	1461—1483
	CHARLES VIII. (the Courteous),	1483—1498
	LOUIS XII. (the Father of his People),	1498—1515
	FRANCIS I. (d'Angoulême),	1515—1547
	HENRY II.,	1547—1559
	FRANCIS II.,	1559—1560
	CHARLES IX.,	1560—1574
BOURBON BRANCH.	HENRY III.,	1574—1589
	HENRY IV.,	1589—1610
	LOUIS XIII.,	1610—1643
	LOUIS XIV.,	1643—1715
	LOUIS XV.,	1715—1774
	LOUIS XVI.,	1774—1793
	THE FIRST REPUBLIC,	1793—1799
	THE CONSULATE,	1799—1804
	THE FIRST EMPIRE,	1804—1814
BOUR- BONS.	LOUIS XVIII.,	1814—1824
	CHARLES X.,	1824—1830
	LOUIS PHILIPPE,	1830—1848
	THE SECOND REPUBLIC,	1848—1852
	THE SECOND EMPIRE,	1852—1870
	THE THIRD REPUBLIC,	1870—

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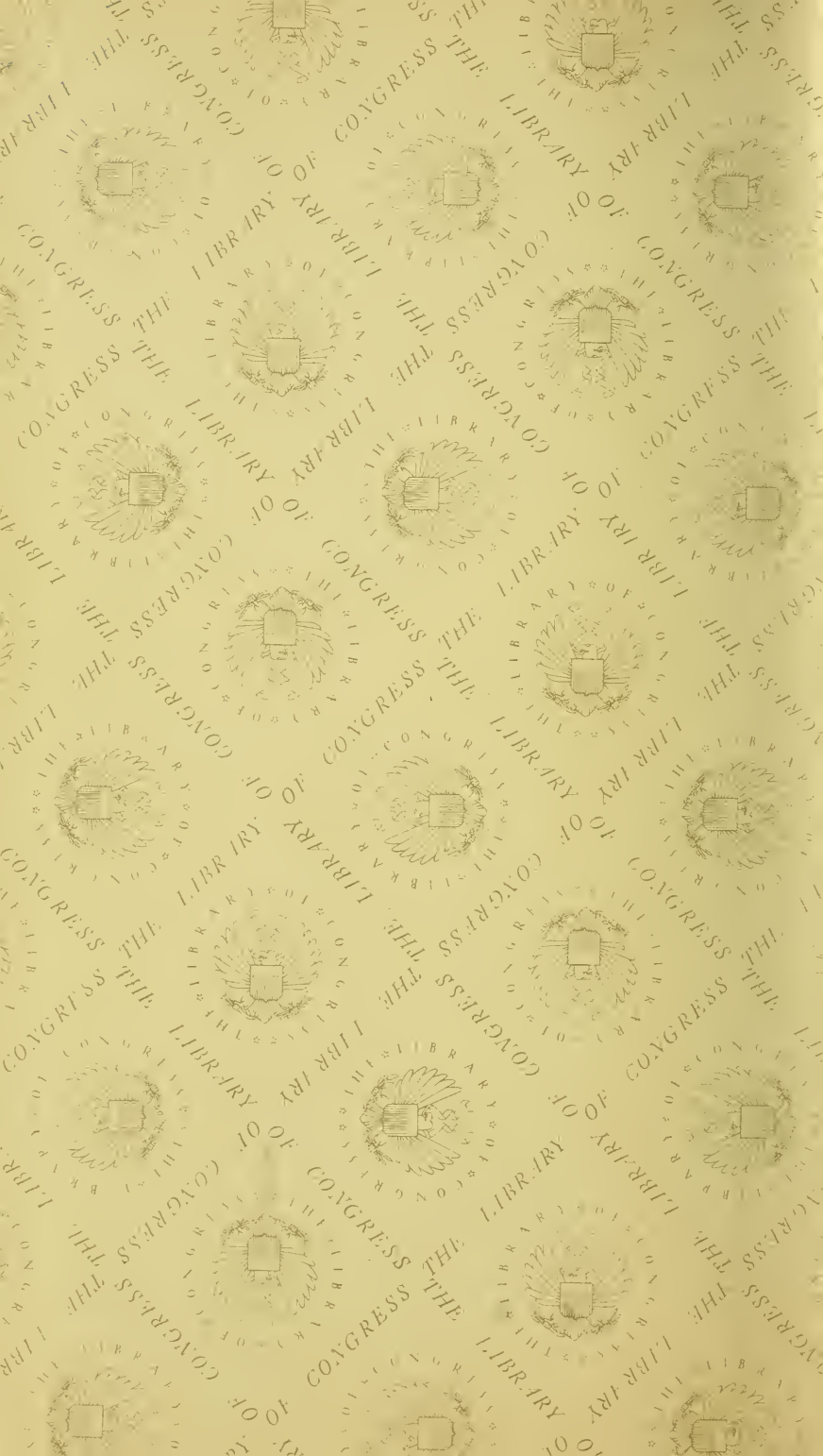
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